

Village Sermons;
OR,
TWELVE PLAIN AND SHORT
DISCOURSES

ON THE
Principal Doctrines of the Gospel;

INTENDED FOR THE USE OF
FAMILIES, SUNDAY-SCHOOLS,

COMMITTEE
ASSEMBLED FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION
COUNTRY VILLAGES.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

SIXTH EDITION, ENLARGED.

BY GEORGE BURDER. *R*

Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. *Isa. xlii. 4.*

London:

PRINTED FOR T. CHAPMAN, 151, FLEET-STREET,

By HINNEY and GOLD, Shoe-Lane.

1800.

[Price One Shilling.]

P R E F A C E.

THE following Sermons are intended, primarily, for the use of those pious and zealous persons, who, pitying the deplorable ignorance of their poor neighbours, are accustomed to go into country villages to instruct them: a practice, which, though but lately adopted, bids fair to produce the most substantial and extensive advantages. A scarcity of discourses, exactly fitted for this benevolent purpose, has been justly complained of; for though there are hundreds of admirable sermons extant, yet as most of them were originally calculated to edify intelligent and well-informed congregations, and were published on account of some superior excellence in style or composition, they are ill suited to the instruction of a rustic and untaught people. This has induced the author to attempt a few *village sermons*—very plain and short, yet on the most interesting subjects, and with frequent appeals to the conscience.

These discourses may be useful to families, especially those who cannot procure more expensive volumes. Serious masters may permit them to be laid in the kitchen for the use of the servants. The Teachers of Sunday Schools, especially, where the means of grace are not enjoyed, may, perhaps, think proper to read them to the children. And, as each sermon is printed independent of the rest, and may be readily separated, generous Christians may have opportunity to distribute among their tenants, workmen, or servants, a number of religious tracts, at a very small expence, adapting the subject to the particular object of their charity.

The Author begs leave to suggest, that after a sermon has been read in a village, it may be expedient to leave copies of it, or one at least, with the people; that by a second reading, in private, the important truth, that was publickly recommended to their attention, may be better understood, and more deeply considered.

In several different sermons, some of the same sentiments may be observed to occur; this the Author was not anxious to avoid, because he judged that the persons, whose profit he had in view, needed to have "line upon line, and precept upon precept." Happy will he be, if, by the perusal of them any of his fellow men "be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;" to whose blessing the following pages are committed.

The Conversion of the Jailer.

A S E R M O N,

ON

ATCS, xvi. 30, 31.

Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

THE question I have read to you was asked by the Jailer at Philippi, and the answer was given by Paul and Silas. The case was this: Paul and Silas were taken up for preaching the gospel, and brought before the rulers. The rulers unjustly caused them to be severely whipped, and then "cast them into prison, charging the Jailer to keep them safely; who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks."

But these good men were not unhappy; their master was with them, according to his gracious promise, and filled their hearts with joy: so that, even at midnight, they could not refrain from singing praises to God; and their fellow prisoners, in other dungeons, heard them with surprise.

Just then, that God might shew his regard to them, and his anger against their persecutors, there was, all on a sudden, a very great and awful earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken by it. At the same time, all the doors flew open; and all the bands and fetters that were on them, and the rest of the prisoners, dropped off at once.

The keeper of the jail starting up from his sleep, and finding the prisoners at liberty, was so terrified lest he should be charged with a breach of trust in letting them escape, that he drew his sword, and was going to stab himself.

But Paul knowing his wicked design, and moved

with pity for him, though he had used them so ill, cried out aloud, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." The Jailer, calling for a light, ran with all speed into the inner prison; and being full of horror at such an appearance of God in favour of his servants, and, at the same time, struck by the Holy Spirit with a deep conviction of his own guilt and danger, he threw himself on the ground before them, and asked their direction for the relief of his soul, in the words of our text: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" A more important question was never asked. It becomes every one to make the enquiry; and if any one of you have never before seriously made it, God grant you may do so now! The answer given, and the only proper answer that could be given, was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." May the Lord assist us while we consider these two parts of the text!

I. *An important question.*

II. *A gospel answer.*

I. *The question.* It is in few words, but they are full of meaning. Let us examine it. And I shall consider it, first,

As the language of Conviction. By conviction, I mean that work of the Holy Spirit on the mind of a sinner, whereby he is convinced that he is a sinner, and is properly affected with it. Without this people try to excuse or lessen their sins. Some lay the blame of their sin upon others, as Adam did upon Eve, and as Eve did upon the serpent. People in general think very little, and very lightly, of their sin. Some even make a mock at sin, and glory in it. This is a sad state to be in. Such persons are very far from God, and have no religion at all, whatever they may pretend to have. Such were the Pharisees, who were thought to be very religious; but they generally despised and opposed Jesus Christ; for, as he told them, "the whole need not a physician, but those who are sick."

But it is a good thing to be sensible of our sin. It is the first work of God upon the soul to make us so.

For

For this purpose we must consider the holy law of God contained in the Ten Commandments. "By the law is the knowledge of sin;" and, "Sin is the transgression of the law." Thus St. Paul himself came to see he was a sinner, as he tells us, Rom. vii. 9. "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." If ever we have broken the law, even once in our lives, we are sinners; for, as it is written, Gal. iii. 10, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law, to do them." Now, *who* is there that can pretend to say, he never sinned in all his life? Do you not often, at public prayers, say, you are miserable sinners? But it is one thing to say so, merely in a customary way; and another, to be seriously convinced of it, and deeply affected with it.

The Holy Spirit not only brings us to admit, what we can hardly deny, that we have sinned; but he also shews us, that we have sinned much and often. That we have sinned in our hearts thousands of times, when we have not seemed to others to sin.

He also shews us the very great *evil* there is in sin. He shews us what abominable *ingratitude* there is in it; for "God has nourished us, and brought us up as children, and we have rebelled against him." He shews what a *base* and *filthy* thing sin is; that it makes us hateful and abominable in his sight, viler than the brutes that perish. And he also shews us the *danger* there is in sin. "The wages of sin is death." Sin brought all our miseries into the world. It is owing to sin that we must all die, and return to dust; and what is worse, sin exposes us to the wrath of God and the flames of hell for ever. Now the Jailer saw all this, and therefore cried out, "What must I do to be saved?" And this leads me next to observe, that,

This question bespeaks Fear. Yes, my brethren, it is the language of fear: it is the language of terror and consternation. Whenever we are alarmed at the approach of some dreadful evil, it is natural to cry, What

shall I do? And have not sinners much to fear? Is it not "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God?" O! consider who he is that we have provoked by our sins. It is the great the Almighty God, who made the world with a word, and can crush it in a moment. It is "the Lord, who hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned, at his presence. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?" Nahum, i. 3—6. This is that dreadful God, who has said, "that the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all who forget him." Shall we not fear him then? shall we not tremble at his presence? "Yea, saith the Lord, I say unto you, fear him who can not only kill the body, but cast both body and soul into hell." O! how would you shudder to see a fellow creature burning at a stake; how would you wish that death would speedily end his pain! But how would you feel to see him burning a whole hour, a whole day, a whole week, and all the time filling the air with horrid shrieks, and crying in vain for ease or death? Horrid as this would be, it gives but a faint idea of hell; that dreadful place of torment, "where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched." It was the dread of this that made the Jailer cry, "What must I do to be saved?" And it was well for him, that he foresaw the evil, and found a refuge from it. God grant we may all do the same. But there is more in the question.

It is also the language of *Desire*; earnest, ardent desire. The natural man desires only carnal things. What shall I eat, what shall I drink, what shall I wear? How may I be rich, and happy, and respected? or, as the Psalmist expresses it, "Who will shew me any good?"—any worldly good, any temporary good. But "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The awakened soul has new desires; or rather, all his desires are brought into one, and that one is salvation. "What shall

shall I do to be *saved*?—to be delivered from the wrath to come; to have my sins pardoned; to be restored to the divine favour?" This is now "the one thing needful." Without this, all other things are of no value; they are less than nothing, and vanity, compared with salvation. This earnest desire will soon be expressed in prayer. For the sinner knows that salvation can come only from God; and, as it was remarked by Christ himself, concerning Saul when converted, "Behold he prayeth;" so it will always be found, that the desire of the new-born soul will vent itself in prayer. Those who live without prayer are strangers to this desire, and are totally destitute of religion.

The question in our text is likewise the language of *Hope*. I do not mean a lively and believing hope, founded upon the gospel, but a feeble, wavering hope, arising from a general notion of the mercy of God. For there is in the minds of all mankind, some notion that God is merciful, and may possibly pardon; and though this is too often abused, and people encourage themselves by it to go on in sin, yet it is of great service to convinced sinners, and keeps them from despair, till the Spirit of God leads them by the gospel to know that there is indeed forgiveness with him, and that the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin. Therefore the poor Jailer, though a blind Heathen, does not say, "There is no mercy for me; I am such a sinner I never can be saved." But his question seems to say, as the repenting Ninevites said, on the preaching of Jonah, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger that we perish not?" Jonah, iii. 9.

Once more, we may observe, that the Jailer's question includes a *Confession of his Ignorance*. He wanted to be saved, but he knew not *how*; nor can any man know this aright till he is taught of God. It is the true character of natural men, as mentioned Rom. iii. 17, that "the way of peace they have not known." By the fall of man, in Adam, "darkness has covered the
the

the earth, and gross darkness the people." And this is the state, not of the blind Heathens, who have not the Bible, but of a great many called Christians. How many are there, among us, who are entirely ignorant of the way in which poor sinners are saved by Jesus Christ? But to remove this fatal darkness, Christ, the sun of righteousness, hath arisen upon the earth. He is the light of the world; and he has commanded his ministers to "preach the gospel to every creature." Paul and Silas were so employed before they were cast into prison. It had been declared in the city concerning them—"These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation," ver. 17. As soon, therefore, as the Jailer was convinced of his need of salvation, and his ignorance, he earnestly desires to be taught by them. He no longer reviles and abuses these ministers of Christ, but applies to them for instruction. And thus it will be with all who are truly serious. They will not mock at preachers of the gospel, but rather "Stand in the way, and see, and ask for the old paths; where is the good way, that they may walk therein, and find rest for their souls," Jer. vi. 16. And now, say, my friends, whether you have ever felt in your minds this earnest desire to know the way of God more perfectly? For this end, do you bow your knees to God in prayer? Do you read your Bible for this purpose? And with this view do you go to hear the ministers of Christ? Be assured, this is the pursuit of all who are under divine influence.

This question is also the language of *Legality*. By legality, I mean cleaving to the law; or, "going about to establish our own righteousness" by the deeds of the law, or our good works. When God made man at first, he made a covenant of works with him. If he obeyed the will of God perfectly, he was to live; but if he failed in a single instance, he was to die. He did fail, and therefore could never attain life by his own righteousness. God was pleased to save him by grace,
and

and not by works. In like manner, the Scripture assures us, that by grace alone we are saved through faith, and not by any works of righteousness which we have done. But, till we are taught of God, we are all apt to think that we can save ourselves, wholly or partly by our own doings. The poor Jailer was of this mind, and therefore asks, "What must I *do* to be saved?" He thought it must be by *doing* something that he must obtain the pardon of our sins and eternal life; but he was soon better informed by the ministers of the gospel.

Finally, I consider this question as the language of *Submission*. Poor man! his heart was alarmed with fear, and humbled for sin. He saw nothing but eternal destruction before him, and would give all the world to avoid it; and therefore he cries, What shall I do? As if he had said, Shew me my duty, and let it be ever so hard and difficult, I am ready to do it. I would go through fire or water, so that my precious soul may be saved. And is it so with *you*? Are you willing to part with your sins? Depend upon it you are not in the way to salvation till you are willing to part with all for Christ: and if you are, how gladly will you hear the true way to salvation, as declared by these inspired servants of our Lord. This is contained in the second part of our subject; or,

II. *The gospel answer*, given to the Jailer's question. This short and plain answer is the only true one that can be given to the important enquiry; and it is of vast importance, that a convinced soul be led in the right way. I am afraid that some men, some ministers, would not have given this answer, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*. I am afraid, that if a person, under that sense of sin which I have described, were to go to an ungodly minister, and say, O, Sir, what must I do to be saved? he would give different advice. He would say, "I hope you have done nothing very bad. You have not killed any body. You have not robbed any body. You are no worse than your neighbours. I would

would have you lay aside such gloomy notions. Go into company, and be amused. Continue to do your duty, and you need not fear. But be sure you do not go among the Methodists; they will drive you mad." But you may learn from the text, that it is no madness to be concerned for the salvation of our souls, nor to be earnest in learning how we must be saved. The Jailer never acted a more rational part, nor asked a wiser question, than in this instance. *They* are the madmen, who sell their souls for the short lived pleasures of sin. You may also learn from this passage, *who* are the true ministers of Christ; they are those who preach him, and direct you to flee to him for salvation. Now all these, with one accord, in all countries, and of all parties, will unite and say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."

And here you may observe, how false that notion is, which some people maintain of zealous ministers, namely, that they preach nothing but damnation; whereas the subject of what we preach is *salvation*. If we say any thing of damnation, it is that you may avoid it, and flee to Christ, as the deliverer from it. There is no need for the vilest sinner to despair. St. Paul says to the Jailer, though he had been a very bad man, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The gospel is *good news*, my friends; it publishes a free, full, everlasting salvation, to the chief of sinners.

Observe, *Who it is* that St. Paul recommends to the notice of this distressed man. It is the LORD JESUS CHRIST. It is the LORD. The maker of heaven and earth, Col. i. 16; — "the Lord of all," Acts x. 30, who came down from heaven. The "Son of God," who became "the Son of man," that we the children of men, might become the children of God. His name is called JESUS, which signifies, a *Saviour*, and he was so called, because "he came to save us from our sins," Matt. i. 21. Yet, this is, indeed, a "faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus

Jesus came into the world to save sinners." He is also called CHRIST, or the Messiah, long promised, and long expected by the Jews; and it signifies the *Anointed*, which implies, that he was every way qualified for the work of salvation, and appointed to it. This then is the glorious person to whom a sinner is directed to look for salvation. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He exhorts him to *believe*. What is it to believe on him? I answer, it is to believe all that God says in the gospel concerning him, so as to look to him alone for salvation. Faith is explained by *coming to Christ*; it is the application of the mind to him for relief. It is called *receiving Christ*; the soul accepts him as held forth in the gospel, in all his saving characters and offices. It is a *committing the soul* to him, knowing there is salvation in him and in no other, and humbly relying on his love and faithfulness to preserve it unto eternal salvation. But the nature of faith is more fully considered in another Sermon.

Observe further, the comfortable assurance that is here given to the distressed Jailer. *Thou shalt be saved.* Salvation was what he longed for. He wanted to know the way of it. He is directed to Jesus as the Saviour, and to believe on him, as the way of being saved by him; and in so doing, he is assured that salvation shall be his. Blessed be God for many precious promises to this purpose in his word. Hear what Jesus Christ himself saith, John iii. 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." And in another place, John vi. 40, "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life."

APPLICATION.

AND now, my friends, let me ask you, Are you concerned about your souls? Were you ever brought, like the Jailer, to ask, with seriousness, with earnestness of soul, what must I do to be saved? Are you not a sinner? Are you not a dying sinner? Must you not soon appear before your Judge? What, then, will you

plead? Are you ready for the solemn trial? O, consider these things! Trifle no longer with your souls! Eternity is at hand, Heaven, or Hell, will soon be your portion. And can you be unconcerned? Be assured that serious consideration, and deep conviction, are absolutely necessary. There is no real religion without these. If you never felt a concern for the salvation of your soul—if you never felt a desire to know how you must be saved, you are yet a stranger to any true religion. You are a Christian only in name. You are far from God, and in a most dangerous condition. O then look up to God for the teaching of his Spirit; beg him to take away your heart of stone, and to make you truly desirous of his salvation.

If you are concerned about your soul, which way do you look for help? If you would be saved, what course do you take? Do you say, "I must repent and reform?" It is true; so you must. But do you think that repentance, or reformation, is sufficient to save your soul. No, Jesus is the only Saviour. The apostles directed sinners to believe in him. That is your first business. Pray for faith. It is the gift of God; and he will give it you, if ye will ask him. And if you truly believe, repentance and reformation will surely follow, together with all good works, by which a true faith is as certainly known as a tree is discerned by its fruits. How soon did the Jailer prove the truth of his faith in this manner? He shewed the utmost readiness to hear the gospel preached by the ministers of Christ; and he joined to works of piety, those of charity; "he took Paul and Silas, the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes;" he also took upon himself the full profession of this new and despised religion, by being baptised, and so separating himself from all his heathen neighbours. Thus let us immediately separate ourselves from the vain world, and boldly confess to whom we belong; while we shew the strongest affection to the ministers and people of God.

The Broad and the Narrow Way.



S E R M O N,

ON

MATTHEW, vii. 13, 14.

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be which find it.

IT is with great propriety that human life is compared to a journey, and every man to a traveller; for life is very short, and the present state is not our final rest, but only preparatory to it. Every man has some particular point at which he aims, and is daily travelling either to heaven or hell.

These words must have great weight with all who reverence the name and authority of Jesus Christ; for they are his words, and they contain matter of eternal importance to us all. They consist of a short exhortation—"Enter ye in at the strait gate;" and a very important reason for preferring that to the wide gate; for the wide gate leads to destruction, but the narrow one to eternal life. In discoursing on the text, let us consider,

I. The wide gate, and the broad way, with the end of it.

SERM. II.

B

II. The

2 THE BROAD AND THE NARROW WAY.

II. The strait gate, and the narrow way, with what it leads to. And,

III. Enforce the exhortation—"Enter ye in at the strait gate."

And now, O Thou that beholdest the evil and the good; Thou who knowest every heart, and seest which of these ways we are in, make the word useful to us all, and incline poor sinners to choose the narrow way, that so they may find everlasting life !

I. We are to consider the wide gate, and the broad way. And what is this but sin? If there is a way to hell, sin is certainly that way, for "the wages of sin is death;" but let such persons remember, that "what a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "If we live after the flesh, we shall die," Rom. vi. 23. But, to be more particular, this broad way includes, *A thoughtless mind, a carnal heart, and a wicked life.*

1. A thoughtless mind. And O how common this is! How many live as thoughtless about their souls, as if they had none. They think no more of God, and Christ, and salvation, than if they were incapable of thinking; they are like the beasts that perish. Although the great end of our being is to know, serve, and glorify God; yet is this wholly lost sight of and forgotten. Although the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and the care of the soul is the one thing needful; yet thousands, even in this Christian country, live like Atheists, and God is not in all their thoughts. O, prodigious and lamentable stupidity! Awake, O sleeper, arise, and call upon thy God, lest thou perish! Where is thy conscience? What says death? Is it not approaching? O rouse yourselves from this dangerous lethargy, and think what you are, and where you are going. Some of you may be free from
the

the groffer vices ; not chargeable, perhaps, with profaneness or drunkenness ; yet know, that if living in ease and security, without any care about your soul and eternity, you are, equally with the vilest characters, in the broad road to destruction.

Again, *The carnal or fleshly heart* is included ; for the Holy Ghost describes the heart of man in its natural and depraved state. The immortal mind of man, originally created in the image of God, and formed for spiritual exercises, is now, by the Fall of Adam, become carnal. So St. Paul speaks in the 8th of Romans, verse the 5th, "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." The carnal man is all for the world. His cares, his hopes, his fears, his desires, his pleasures, his pains, his conversation, is all about the world. His fleshly mind is crowded with worldly thoughts, and, as it was at Bethlehem, there is no room for Christ in the inn. But let it be observed, that whoever is in this case is in the broad road ; for the scripture declares, that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God," and that this "carnal mind is enmity against God." This is the miserable condition of many who pass for moral, industrious good sort of people ; but they are far from God ; — they are "sensual, not having the Spirit ;" and minding only earthly things, their end is destruction. Phil. iii. 19.

Once more, observe that the broad way includes — *A wicked life.* A life of sin. Whoever lives in wilful disobedience to the commands of God, is assuredly in the road to destruction. Let none deceive themselves with vain words and idle excuses. "He that committeth sin is of the devil," 1 John, iii. 8. "Know ye not," saith the Apostle Paul, "that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God ? Be not deceived : neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor thieves,

nor covetous, nor drunkards, shall inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. God will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain; nor will the sabbath-breaker escape unpunished. How is it, then, that poor sinners flatter themselves with hopes of salvation; "for these things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience," Eph. v. 6.

To these destructive sins another may be added, which is more destructive than them all; namely, the sin of unbelief. Though a person should be free from many of the sins just mentioned, yet unbelief would be like a millstone about his neck, and sink him for ever into the gulph of perdition. God having, in his rich mercy to mankind, sent his Son to be a Saviour, and sent his gospel to publish this in our ears, nothing can be more displeasing to him than to "neglect his great salvation," or "refuse him that speaketh from heaven." Our blessed Saviour, while he mercifully promises, that "he who believeth shall be saved," solemnly declares, that "he that believeth not shall be damned," Mark, xvi. 16.

This, then, is the wide gate and the broad way—namely, a thoughtless mind—a carnal heart—and a wicked life; all which, by unbelief, which refuses the only method of salvation, lead to certain and everlasting ruin.

But you will ask, Why are these things so described? Why are they compared to a wide gate and a broad way? The reason is plain; for as it is easy to go through a wide gate and walk in a broad road, so the sinner finds no hindrance to his entering on a life of sin, and little or no difficulty in pursuing it.

Our corrupt nature strongly inclines us to sin. David says "We are conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity,"

quity," Psalm li. 5.; and that "the wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." You know that children need no teacher to make them wicked. Sin is in our very nature, and we walk in this road of our own accord; it is natural and pleasant to us: while we as naturally dislike the narrow road, and despise those who walk in it.

Besides, those who are in the broad road meet with no hindrances from the world or from the devil. The broad way is the way of the world; for, as the apostle John saith, "The whole world lieth in wickedness," except the happy few who are delivered from it by the grace of God. In this broad way all ranks of men may be seen, from kings and princes down to slaves and beggars. Now it is easy to walk in a broad road with a multitude, provided they are all going one way, which is the case here; and the world will love its own. In this road, persons feel the great force of example, and plead, you know, for what they do, by the commonness of it, or its being the way of the world. They are afraid of appearing singular, even though conscience sometimes remonstrates against their evil courses. The pleasures of sin entice them to go forward, notwithstanding every warning of their danger; and the hopes of gain, and the favour of mankind, seduce them; for these they are afraid of losing if they become religious.

This road is wide and easy, because the devil gives no disturbance to them that walk in it. While "the strong man armed keeps the house, the goods are in peace." He strongly opposes the people of God who are in the narrow way; he disputes every inch of ground with them; but he is in league with the e; he endeavours to keep them from all fear of consequences; he blinds their minds, lest the light of the

gospel should shine into them; and he fills their hearts with prejudices against faithful preachers, who would point out their sin and danger. Yea, he takes the same course with them as he did with our first mother, when he tempted her to eat the forbidden fruit. God had said, "If ye eat it ye shall surely die;" but this father of lies directly contradicts the threatening, and induces her to eat by saying, "Ye shall not surely die." So in this case our Saviour plainly declares, that the broad road of sin leads to destruction; but he deceives poor sinners, and prevails upon them to believe, that though they live in sin and unbelief, they shall not experience the destruction threatened.

But who will you believe—the God of truth, or the father of lies? Observe the text: "the broad road leads to destruction;" and O think what that destruction is. Think what "a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God." Think, O think, of "the worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched." What would you not do to prevent the destruction of your property, the destruction of your dear relations, the destruction of your life? But what are all these to your soul, your immortal soul? "For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Well then, would you avoid this destruction, and surely you would, this broad road must be forsaken; and, blessed be God, that it is not yet too late to forsake it; and you must enter into the narrow way, by the strait gate, mentioned in the text. Let us therefore, in the second place,

II. Consider what is meant by the strait gate, and the narrow way, and what it leads to.

The design of these expressions is to shew, that the entrance into a religious course of life is painful and difficult,

difficult, and that tribulation is to be expected in our progress. We may include the whole in three words, **REPENTANCE, FAITH, and HOLINESS**; a little examination of these particulars will prove the propriety of the phrases in the text.

John the Baptist, our Saviour, and his Apostles, all went out and preached **REPENTANCE**; and without this we are assured men must perish. Now repentance cannot but be painful, for it consists chiefly in a godly sorrow for sin, together with a firm resolution to forsake it at all events, and whatever it may cost us. The penitent sinner, being convinced that he has sinned, and come short of the glory of God; that he has by sin destroyed himself, and became liable to the dreadful wrath of God, perceives that he has all his life been acting a most foolish and hurtful part; but that he must now forsake all his sins, though dear to him as his right eye, and useful to him as his right hand. Now all this appears to a natural man irksome and unpleasant. He is unwilling to think seriously of his sins and of their fatal consequences, and still more unwilling to part with them. He therefore shuns this, as a man would avoid passing through a very strait and low door, when a spacious one offered itself at the same time.

FAITH is also intended by the narrow way. "By grace are we saved through faith," and "without faith it is impossible to please God." True faith consists in so believing the gospel of Jesus Christ, as to take him for our only Saviour; utterly renouncing all dependence on our own works and righteousness; submitting to be saved by the mere favour of God in Christ, as a poor beggar is relieved by an alms. Jesus Christ is, himself, the way. "I, saith he, (John, xiv. 6.) I am the way"—no man cometh to the Father but by me; and it is by faith that we walk in
this

THE BROAD AND THE NARROW WAY.

this way ; for all true christians live by faith, and walk with God by faith.

Now this way of living, renouncing all our own works, in point of dependence, and accounting them in that respect, as "dung and dross, that we may win Christ;" this way is so contrary to our natural inclinations, and so humbling to a self-righteous spirit, that it may well be called a narrow way. There are thousands who are so proud of their good hearts and their good works, that they scorn to be indebted to Christ for his righteousness. They think themselves rich, and increased with goods, and that they stand in need of nothing, while, in fact, they are poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked. Rev. iii. 18. The boasting Pharisee, whom we read of in the gospel, was so swollen with the pride of his duties and works, that he could not enter into the strait gate; but the poor Publican, who saw and felt himself a sinner, stooping low before God, entered it, crying out, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

The way of holiness is also a narrow way. Holiness consists in the conformity of our will to the will of God; it is produced by the power of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of a sinner. The law of God is written on his heart; whereby he is disposed to resist temptation, to forsake sin, and to practise obedience to the commands of God. In doing this, we must deny ourselves, take up our daily cross, and follow Christ. We must mortify the flesh, with its affections and lusts. We must crucify the old man of sin, and walk, not according to the course of the world, nor according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Now, in doing this, we cannot but meet with difficulties. We shall meet with continual opposition from our own corruptions, the law in our members warring against the law of our minds. We shall

shall also suffer reproach and contempt from the world; for all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. And besides all this, God our heavenly father, sees it necessary to chastise us with the rod of affliction, of which all his children are partakers, for spiritual good.

Considering therefore the nature of Repentance, Faith, and Holiness, we clearly see, how properly a true christian may be said to enter upon a religious life by a strait gate, and to proceed in it by a narrow way.

But here, perhaps, an objection may be started. Does not our Lord say,—“Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light?” Does not Solomon say, “The ways of wisdom are pleasantness, and her paths peace?” And does not St. John say, that “Christ’s commands are not grievous?” How then is it true, that the gate is strait and the way narrow?

I answer, the ways of religion are perfectly easy and pleasant in their own nature; the difficulty arises from the depravity and corruption of our nature. Angels do the will of God with perfect ease and pleasure, for they have no sin in their nature to oppose it. But through the power of sin in our hearts, the entrance into religion becomes painful and difficult and through the remains of it in regenerate persons, more or less of that difficulty is found in the whole journey. Yet grace renders it practicable, and often pleasant; so that no believer repents of his choice, nor wishes to turn back because of the hardships he endures; but like Moses of old, “chooses rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures of Egypt”—and for the
the

TO THE BROAD AND THE NARROW WAY.

the same good reason—having “respect to the recompence of reward.” And this leads us to the last particular, namely,

III. To enforce the exhortation, “Enter ye in at the strait gate.”

O how wise, how gracious, how reasonable is this advice! May God dispose all our hearts to obey it! There are but two ways that we can travel; the one leads to eternal misery; the other to eternal bliss! and that we may not miss our way, the blessed Jesus clearly marks out the right one, so that we cannot mistake—the gate is strait, the way is narrow, and there are few travellers in it. It is true, there are difficulties in the way, but heaven will make amends for all. Heaven is worth every thing, or it is worth nothing. Let us not be such cowards as to be frightened at a little trouble. Nothing, even in this life, can be attained without it. A child cannot learn to read without difficulty. A boy cannot learn a trade without pains. We cannot carry on any business without care and labour. But are we therefore prevented from these things? No, we wisely consider the advantage, and act accordingly.

Neither let us be swayed by numbers. “Follow not a multitude to do evil.” Let us not think ourselves right, because we do as others. We must suspect ourselves if we do. The broad road is thronged with travellers; but the narrow has only a pilgrim here and there. And this should keep us from being ashamed of singularity in a good cause. Christ here teaches us to expect that religion will have few advocates comparatively. God grant that we, however, may not be of that unhappy number!

Well then, let us, by divine grace, resolve on eternal life

life at all events. On the one hand, here is a broad road, full of passengers, in which, it is true, the poor, paltry, perishing, intoxicating pleasure of sin may be enjoyed for a moment, though not without many a pang; and at the end of this short course is—O tremble, my soul, at the thought—*Destruction!*—not a ceasing to be, but an utter end of all pleasure for evermore. Misery, pains, torments, without mitigation, without cessation, without end. Everlasting separation from the presence of God, the fountain of life; and confinement in chains of darkness, with devils and damned spirits to all eternity.

On the other hand, God has set before us the way of life. The entrance is strait, the way is narrow. Difficulties indeed there are; but grace lessens them all, and sweetens them all; so that the worst of Christ's way, is better than the best of Satan's way; and what is best of all, the end is eternal life. And, O, what tongue can tell, what heart conceive, what God has laid up for them that love him! Is there a redeemed soul in glory, who now repents of the pains he took in religion? Does he repent of his repentance? Does he regret that he believed in the Son of God? Is he sorry that he walked in the ways of holiness? O no. Each glorified saint reviews, with ecstasy of joy, the rich grace of God, that enabled him to discover the danger of that broad road in which he once travelled, and that placed his feet in the narrow but sure and safe road to eternal bliss.

Obey then the words of our Lord in another place, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate."—Agonize to do it. Do it at all events. Do it directly. Let not a moment be lost. "Escape for your lives; look not behind you; neither tarry ye in all the plain: escape to the mountain, lest ye be consumed." Fly from the wrath to come. "For many will seek to enter in
and

and shall not be able." (Luke, xiii. 24.) Many who would willingly go to heaven, seek after it in so cold and slothful a manner, or by such false and mistaken ways, that they never obtain it : and O how many, who now neglect it altogether, will knock for admittance when the door is shut. Now, therefore, while it is called to-day, let us hear his voice. Let us be diligent in observing the sabbath, attending on the preached word as often as possible, reading the scriptures daily ; and, especially, let us wrestle hard with God in prayer, that he would give us his Spirit to teach and assist us, and work in our hearts that deep repentance, that true faith, and that genuine holiness, which are the proper exercises of all who travel in the narrow way to heaven.

The almost Christian and Apostate.

BROAD is the road that leads to death,
And thousands walk together there ;
But wisdom shows a narrower path,
With here and there a traveller.
" Deny thyself, and take thy cross,"
Is the Redeemer's great command !
Nature must count her gold but dross,
If she would gain the heav'nly land.
The fearful soul that tires and faints,
And walks the ways of God no more,
Is but esteem'd almost a saint,
And makes his own destruction sure.
Lord, let not all my hopes be vain ;
Create my heart entirely new ;
Which hypocrites could ne'er attain ;
Which false apostates never knew

*The Nature, Spirituality, and Use of
the Law*



S E R M O N,

ON

ROM. vii. 9.

*For I was alive, without the Law once; but when the
commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

IT is a most true maxim of Scripture, that "The whole need not a physician, but those who are sick." The church of Christ has been justly compared to an hospital, to which none but the sick repair; no wonder than that the gay and healthy shun it. But, whether we know it or not, our souls are sadly and dangerously diseased; and the worst symptom of all is, we know it not.

It may not be pleasant to a person to be told of any thing amiss in his health, his family, or his affairs; yet he is a true friend who gives the information, and he is a wise man who thankfully receives it. With this view John the Baptist was sent before Christ; by preaching repentance to prepare the way for him; and the disciples of John gladly received the Saviour. Without the knowledge of ourselves, as sinners, we cannot understand the gospel, nor prize Jesus. And this is the true key to what would otherwise be unaccountable—the general neglect of the great salvation. When our Lord himself and his inspired Apostles, with every possible advantage preached the gospel, few believed the heavenly report; almost all, with one consent, began to make excuse; one going to his farm, and another

SERM. III.

C

to

to his merchandize. Now, as men are all alive to worldly pleasure and profit, it is evident, that their neglect arises from ignorance of their true state; and this is from their ignorance of the law of God, which is the only certain rule and standard by which to measure ourselves.

Hence, St. Paul, designing in this Epistle to treat fully concerning the great point of justification, or being made righteous before God, takes care, in the first place, to prove that all men in the world are sinners—the Gentiles against the law of nature, and the Jews against the written law, or ten commandments. He well knew the importance of this method, by his own experience; for he says in the text, “he was alive without the law once,” &c. that is, when he was unconverted, and a proud pharisee, he had high swelling thoughts of himself; thought all was well between God and him; he did not see himself dead in law, being justly condemned by it for his sin; but he was all alive in his own opinion: and his mistake arose from ignorance of the law. He was “without the law;” not without the letter of it; he could have said it by heart: but he did not know its spiritual meaning, and high requirements. But when the commandment came, especially the tenth commandment; when it came in the light and energy of the Holy Spirit, to his mind and conscience; when he saw that it reached to the thoughts, principles, views, and desires of the heart, as well as to his words and actions; requiring perfect purity, and condemning for a single sin, even in thought—then, saith he, then “sin revived, and I died.” Then he saw thousands of things to be sins, which he never thought such before; and he found sin had full power and life in him; sin received in his conscience; he saw it in all its dreadful terror, as justly exposing him to the wrath of God; and he fell under a sense of death and condemnation, as a man dead in law, and deserving to die eternally.

Now,

Now, that we may rightly understand the law, and that it may be "our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ," let us,

First, Take a view of the holy law, by which is the knowledge of sin; and,

Secondly, Consider the proper effect of a work of the law on the heart.

I. Let us take a view of the holy law of God; for hereby is the knowledge of sin.

Remember, my friends, that God, who is the maker of the world, is also the governor of it. God prefaces his law with these words, *I am Jehovah*, the self-existent Being, the source of all being, on whom all beings depend: and he adds, *I am thy God*, to remind the Jews of their relation to him; for they were his professed worshippers, as we also are. He adds, *who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage*. Here are their obligations to him on account of their wonderful deliverance; so the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ, lays them under infinite obligations to holy obedience. Man is a rational being, and accountable to God for his conduct. Brutes are led by instinct; but it is fit that man should be led by proper motives, willingly to obey his Maker's will. Now, from the first, God gave a law to man. It was not indeed written. There was no occasion for it. Men lived almost a thousand years, and could easily teach their children what God at first taught Adam. At length, however, God saw fit to give his law from Mount Sinai, in dreadful thunders; and also to write it on two tables of stone.

You will observe, that the law of God is summed up in one word, namely, Love; and that this love has two objects: *Love to God*, for what he is in himself, and for the blessings he gives us; and *Love to Man* for God's sake.

The love we owe to God is to be expressed in four

ways; and these are set forth in the first four commandments.

The *first* commandment is, *Thou shalt have no other gods but me.* This requires us to know and confess the true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as the only living God, and our God; in opposition to all idolatry; it requires us also to love and adore him, as the author of our being, and the source of our happiness; and this commandment is broken, not only by worshipping other gods, but by setting our idols in our hearts, by excessive self love, or love of creatures, relations, money, or gratifications of the flesh; so that, according to this, there are many Atheists, living without God in the world, and many idolaters, worshipping the creature.

The *second* commandment forbids all worship of images; and requires us to worship God in the way he has appointed; but, alas! how many wholly neglect and despise his worship! How many worship God with various superstitions and inventions of men! How many others forget that God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and truth! What levity and folly do many mix with their pretended devotions! But in vain do we thus mock God, and play the hypocrite, drawing nigh to him with the lips, when our hearts are from him. The reason added to this commandment, *for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, &c.* shews how extremely displeasing to him it is to neglect his worship, or worship him in an improper manner, and that he will resent this sin not only to the persons who commit it but to their posterity.

The *third* commandment forbids the taking the Lord's name in vain. But, O! how awful is the common practice of cursing and swearing! We may truly say, "because of swearing the land mourneth;" the breath of some men is nothing but blasphemy; "their throat is an open sepulchre; the stench of their profaneness

faneness is infinitely worse than that of a stinking carcase; and many, who do not use the most horrid oaths, will cry out—O Lord! O God! O Christ! God bless us! Lord have mercy! &c. &c. But however common this practice is, let all men know, that God declares, “he will not hold them guiltless that take his name in vain.” O consider what a great God we have to do with; and let his name never be mentioned without a serious pause, allowing us time to think who he is, and that he is greatly to be feared.

The *fourth* commandment respects the religious observation of the Lord’s Day, or Christian Sabbath. We can never enough admire the goodness of God in the appointment of it. Persons should prepare for it, by having every thing in readiness as much as possible, that no part of it, especially the morning, which is the best part of it, should be lost. All unnecessary works are to be laid aside: no journeys, no visits, no settling accounts, writing letters, nor paying and receiving wages. The whole day, from morning to night, should be spent in acts of religious worship, public and private, except so much as must be employed in works of necessity and mercy.

O! how awfully is this holy day profaned by idleness, by needless journeys and visits, by wilfully staying away from public worship, or by persons going to church merely to meet with neighbours for worldly business; or to shew their new cloaths; by going to public houses; by reading newspapers, or by mere worldly vain discourse and amusement!

Now the breach of this commandment, and of the three former, evidently proceeds from want of love to God. If we loved him as the best of beings, we should love his day, revere his name, and prize his worship. And have we not broken all these commandments? Have we not reason to cry, in the words of the Liturgy, “Lord, have mercy upon us, (for having

broken these laws) and incline our hearts to keep them in time to come."

Proceed we now to the second table of the law. The six last commandments respect our love to our neighbour. The sum of all is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The *fifth* commandment respects our nearest neighbour—our relations, our parents. These have the care and expense of education; we can never repay their kindness. We should honour them by obedience to their directions, and by treating them with the greatest respect; and that not only in childhood, but in youth and riper years; we should study to preserve their reputation; to alleviate their infirmities; and if necessary, to support them in old age.

This command also includes all relative duties, whether to superiors, inferiors, or equals: it includes the duty that servants owe to their masters, and subjects to their governors; it forbids mere eye service; wasting the property of superiors; or being unfaithful in what they commit to our trust.

The *sixth* commandment directs us how to shew our love to our neighbour, by a regard to his life and health; and it forbids not only actual murder, but anger, hatred, malice, and other murderous tempers; for "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer," 1 John iii. 15. "Whoever saith to his brother, Raca (thou vile fellow), or thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire," so our Lord declares, Matt. v. 22. All unjust wars, fighting, quarrelling, ill usage, or provocations, which may hurt the health and life of another, are forbidden. Many aged parents are murdered by the base conduct of their children; many wives are murdered by the drunkenness, idleness, and abuse of their husbands; and many poor children are murdered by the neglect and wickedness of their parents. Self-murder is also hereby forbidden, no man having a right over
his

his own life any more than over that of his neighbour. But the worst of all, is *soul-murder*. Parents who neglect to instruct their children, and who are examples of vice to them; drunkards, whoremongers, and adulterers, who allure others to sin with them; all these are soul-murderers.

The *seventh* commandment respects the love of our neighbour, with regard to purity of heart, word, and deed: it forbids not only the actual adultery of married persons, but all fornication, lasciviousness, and wantonness. Every lustful thought, word, or look, makes a person an adulterer in God's sight; for so Christ himself explains this commandment, Matt. v. 28, "Who-soever looketh on a woman to lust after, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." All private uncleanness, known only to God and conscience, and practised, perhaps, by those who pass for chaste and virtuous people, is forbidden. Immodest dress tends to the breaking of this law; as also do lewd books, novels, plays, songs, and pictures. In a word, this commandment requires the most perfect purity in heart, speech and behaviour, and an endeavour to promote the same in others.

* The *eighth* commandment directs us how to shew our love to our neighbour, by a regard to his property. It forbids taking to our own use what belongs to another. Covetousness has led men to invent a thousand ways to cheat and defraud. Those who deceive in selling by false weights and measures; those who run in debt, without the prospect of paying again; those who oppress the poor; servants who neglect their business, or waste their master's property; are all thieves in God's esteem. This command extends much further than human laws can reach; and requires that we should treat our neighbour, with respect to his property, as we could wish to be treated by him.

The *ninth* commandment respects our love to our neighbour,

neighbour, in his reputation or good name. Not only taking a false oath before a magistrate, but all lying, flandering, and evil speaking, is forbidden. And, O! how is the world filled with this! And what is the greater part of common conversation but a wanton breach of this law? We ought to be as tender of another man's character and reputation as of our own, and to avoid all such remarks, reports, censures, and ridicule, as we should be unwilling to receive from others.

The *last* commandment enjoins the love of our neighbour, by requiring us to be content with our condition; forbidding us to envy or grieve at the good of our neighbour, or wish to deprive him of it, that we may enjoy it. Yea, it goes much further, and forbids the most secret wish of the heart to obtain any thing that God forbids; and this is particularly *the commandment* that St. Paul speaks of in the text—"I had not known lust, saith he, (ver. 7.) except the law had said thou shalt not covet." When this commandment came with power to his mind, he saw that the secret workings, and first motions of inordinate affections, were sins. Before he saw this, he thought all was well, for he was free from gross and outward offences; he was what the world calls *a good liver*: but this commandment shewed him the sins of his heart. He found the law was spiritual—reaching to the thoughts and desires of the heart; and thus, "sin, by the commandment, became exceeding sinful." Having taken this brief view of the law, we may proceed,

Secondly, To consider the proper effect of a work of the law upon the heart. "Sin revived, and I died."

The law is "the ministration of condemnation, and of death, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 9. If a person could keep it perfectly, it would entitle him to life; for it was originally "ordained to life;" but "I found it," saith

St.

St. Paul, "to be unto death." The reason is, because we cannot, through the weakness of our fallen nature, keep it perfectly; and if we fail in one point, we are guilty of all. Therefore it is written, Gal. iii. 10, "As many as are of the works of the law (that is, who trust to the works of the law for salvation) are under the curse; for cursed is every one that continueth not in *all things* written in the book of the law to do them."

Now this is the sad condition of us all, till we believe in Christ for righteousness. It is to no purpose for any one to plead—I have not sinned so and so. Hast thou sinned at all? Hast thou sinned once? Then thou art guilty, and the law condemns thee to eternal death. The law makes no allowances, no abatements; it does not say a word about *sincere obedience*, or doing as well as we can. No, the law says, Do all things that are commanded. Do them perfectly. Continue all thy life to do them; and then thou mayest be justified by thy works: but, if thou fail in one instance, thou comest under the curse; for "whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all," James, ii. 10.

A person may say it is true I have sinned; but I am very sorry for my sins, and will amend my life; will not this relieve me from the curse? No. The law has made no provision for repentance, reformation, or pardon. The style of the law is not, Repent and live; or Reform and live. But, keep the whole law perfectly and continually, and live: transgress it, and die. It is true that *the gospel* brings relief for the sinner, because it reveals Christ and his righteousness; but the law knows nothing of mercy. It is not intended to give life, but to kill, and destroy all hopes of life by obedience, and so force the sinner to fly to Christ. So St. Paul speaks, Rom. iii. 19, "Now we know, that whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them
that

that are under the law ; that *every mouth* may be stopped, and *all the world* become guilty before God." This, then, cuts off all hopes of salvation by works ; for the Apostle adds, " Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight ; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." This is its use. It can go no further. It is by the gospel we have the knowledge of righteousness.

We should be very careful to distinguish between the law and the gospel, for many mistakes arise from mingling them together.

" According to the law, salvation is by works ; according to the gospel, it is by grace."

" The law says, Do this, and be saved ; but the gospel says, Believe this, and thou shalt be saved."

" The law threatens to punish the sinner for the first offence ; but the gospel offers him pardon for many offences."

" The law sentences him to death ; the gospel offers him justification to life."

" By the law, he is a guilty sinner ; by the gospel he may be made a glorious saint."

" If he die under the guilt of the broken law, hell will be his everlasting portion ; if he die a partaker of the grace of the gospel, heaven will be his eternal inheritance."

APPLICATION.

And now, my dear friends, having laid before you the nature of the law, let me beg you most seriously to consider what has been said, and that with regard to yourselves. What do *you* know of God's law, by your own experience ? Have you not seen that it is exceeding broad ; that it requires you to love God with all your heart, and soul, and strength ? and your neighbour as yourself ? And have you done this ? Alas !

your

your conscience smites you, and your own mouth must condemn you. How often have you said, "We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done." Probably you have often joined in the church service, and said, after the reading of the commandments, "Lord have mercy upon us," that is, forgive our disobedience to them, "and write all these thy laws in our hearts we beseech thee." Did you mean what you said? If not, you lied before God: If you did you pleaded guilty; you have confessed you are a breaker of the law, and under its curse.

And have you considered, what "a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God?" O, how would your heart melt within you, if you duly considered what it is to be under his curse, and to bear his wrath to all eternity. If you can hear the curses of this law, and not be alarmed for your safety, your heart is hard indeed. May God have mercy upon you, and take away the heart of stone!

Perhaps you are saying, Must I despair then? No; God forbid! You must despair of obtaining salvation by your works, your sorrow for sin, or your future amendment. And this will make the gospel welcome to you. The law has done its office, if it drives you to Christ. It is preached for this very purpose, and "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness." The gospel reveals a free, full, and everlasting salvation. It publishes to the convinced sinner, pardon and life, as the free gift of God; for Christ hath obeyed the precepts of the law in our stead. He hath also born the punishment in our room. "He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." What a blessing have you already received, if God, by his good Spirit, has convinced you of sin! This is the dawn of a glorious day. He will also convince you of righteousness, and shew you, that it may be yours.

Cast

Cast yourselves down at the footstool of mercy. Confess your sins. Acknowledge your guilt. Own your helplessness. Cry for pardon. Fly to Jesus, who waits to be gracious, and all shall yet be well. He hath wounded, that he may heal ; he hath killed, that he may make alive. You now will be glad of the physician, for you feel your sickness ; and he waits to be gracious. You are weary and heavy laden, and he will give you rest.

“ Go, you that rest upon the law,
And madly seek salvation there,
Look to the flames that Moses saw,
And shrink, and tremble, and despair.

“ But I'll retire beneath the cross ;
Saviour, at thy dear feet I lie !
And the keen sword that Justice draws,
Flaming and red, shall pass me by.”

5 DE60

Christ, the End of the Law for Righteousness.



S E R M O N,

ON

ROM. x. 4.

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

THE two principal parts of scripture, which it concerns us most to know, are the Law and the Gospel. "He who can rightly distinguish between these, says Luther, is a good divine;" and we may add, that he who knows how to use both aright, in an experimental and practical manner, is a good christian.

The nature and use of the law has been already considered. The proper effect of it is the same in every believer as it was in St. Paul. "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." The person brought into this state, will be put on the inquiry—How then can I come before God and hope for pardon? If the law be so holy and strict—if it can do nothing for me, but convince me of

SERM. IV.

D

fin,

fin, and condemn me for it—by what means can I be accepted?

Now there are but two ways that ever were proposed of God, or devised by man: the one, according to the old covenant, Do, and live; the other, according to the new—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Whatever ways and means have been thought of, by people of all religions, they may be reduced to these two—*Works* or *Grace*. And these cannot be mixed; for if any merit be allowed to works, there is an end to grace; and if salvation be of grace, then there is no place for the merit of works. So St. Paul speaks, Rom. xi. 6, “If by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” So that you see salvation cannot be by grace and works mixed, it must be by one or the other alone, and we are repeatedly assured in the scripture, that “by grace are we saved, through faith,” and “not by works, lest any man should boast.” Eph. ii. 8, 9.

It is of vast importance to be rightly informed on this head. This may be inferred from what St. Paul says of the Jews, Rom. ix. 30, &c. “The Gentiles, saith he, who followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith: but Israel, which followed after righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.” This, you will say, is strange! What can be the reason of it? He tells us, ver. 31, “Because they sought it not by faith.” How then? “As it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.” Alas, how many thousands called christians, have stumbled in the same way. God preserve us from it! How earnestly did the good apostle wish for the salvation of his mistaken brethren. His “heart’s desire and prayer to God for them was, that they might be saved.” He saw, that
while

while they were looking for life by their works, they were not in the way of salvation. It is true, they had a great zeal for God, but it was good for nothing; it was founded in ignorance. "They were ignorant of God's righteousness," namely, this in the text; and being ignorant of this, and yet wanting a righteousness, "they went about to establish their own;"—they tried to set it up, and make it stand for their acceptance; even their own poor, imperfect, ceremonial, and outward works; but they were totally insufficient for that purpose: and thus through the pride of their hearts, which scorned to be entirely beholden to free grace, they refused to stoop, and submit to be saved by the righteousness of another, even of Christ, who is said in the text to be "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." May God keep us from this worst sort of pride; and enlighten our minds while we attend to the three following particulars.

I. Jesus Christ, by his obedience and death, performed a perfect righteousness.

II. In so doing, he is the end of the law; and,

III. This righteousness is given to every believer.

I. Jesus Christ, by his obedience and death, performed a perfect righteousness.

"God made man upright." He gave him a law to be the rule of his actions, including a promise if he kept it, and a threatening if he broke it. If he obeyed the law perfectly, God would esteem him righteous. Adam fell; and with him, all his posterity; for he was appointed their head and representative. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners," Rom. v. 19. Our nature is now corrupt; and we are born with enmity in our hearts against God. "The carnal mind is not sub-

ject to the law of God, neither can it be," while it remains carnal. But the law is not altered. It requires, what it always did, Love. This was always due from man to his Creator, and always will, whether men pay it or not. If man refuse to give it, he is a rebel and an idolater. The law being ever the same, it thunders out its dreadful curses against every sinner, for every sin. But the law provides no remedy. It will not accept of sincere obedience instead of perfect obedience. It says not a word of accepting a sinner's tears for payment; or admitting his future obedience as a recompence for past sins. No, it constantly demands supreme love and perfect obedience; and condemns the sinner for the want of it in a single instance.

"But what the law could not do, because of the weakness of the flesh, God has done another way." God has sent his Son to be our righteousness. As the law could not abate in its demands, and must have obedience from the creature, or punish the sinner! Jesus Christ graciously undertook to obey and suffer for his people; to obey all the precepts of the law, and to suffer all its pains and penalties. The law required perfect obedience of them; Christ came as their surety to obey for them: and so, as it is written, "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

This blessed and comfortable truth may be fully proved from many scriptures. Take the following, 2 Cor. v. 21. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Jesus Christ knew no sin. He was free from sin in his nature; that holy thing which was born of the virgin, being the Son of God. His whole life was as pure as his birth. He knew no sin in thought, word, or deed.

He

He challenged his bitterest enemies to prove him a sinner—"Which of you, said he, accuseth me of sin?" Yea, the great enemy, the devil, came, and "found nothing in him;" no sin in his heart; no sin in his life. Thus was he the pure and spotless Lamb of God, prepared to bear away the sin of the world.

But Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, was "*made sin*," that is, by imputation; it was reckoned to him; put to his account; in the same manner as his righteousness is imputed to us, or put to our account. Out of his great love to his people, he became their surety, to answer for their sins, and to bear their punishment. So the prophet Isaiah speaks, chap. liii. 4, &c. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all."

The design of Christ's being made sin for us, was, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Righteousness is a perfect conformity to the law of God, without which no man can be saved; for it is written, "The *unrighteous* shall not inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. vi. 9. Now we are all unrighteous, because we have broken the law. "There is none righteous" upon earth, in himself; "no, not one." And yet without a righteousness, we cannot be saved. What then can we do? Where can we look? Only to Jesus. "Surely shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength." "It is not said, in my own works, in my own repentance, no, nor in my own faith, but in the LORD JESUS have I righteousness—righteousness for justification, and strength for sanctification. An imputed righteousness, to procure my acceptance; an imparted strength to produce my holiness. *Surely*, which expresses a firm persuasion, and

an unshaken affiance." To him give all the prophets witness; for "this righteousness of God without the law, is witnessed by the law and the prophets." Hear what the prophet Daniel says of him, chap. ix. 24.—
 α To finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. All this Christ actually did by his obedience unto death; and thus he became the end of the law, which is the second thing we proposed.

II. Jesus Christ, by his righteousness, is become the end of the law; for,

1. Hereby he put an end to the *ceremonial* law, or those ordinances, such as sacrifices, which were types or emblems of him. You may remember, that our Saviour, just before his death, cried out, "*It is finished!*"—as if he had said—My engagements with my Father are accomplished—the types and prophecies are fulfilled—my dreadful sufferings are at an end—the ceremonial law is abolished. Thus "the law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ."

2. The *moral* law, or law of the Ten Commandments, is hereby satisfied and magnified; according to the prophecy, (Isa. xlii. 21.) "He will magnify the law and make it honourable." The law must have its end, and be completely fulfilled, or we cannot appear as righteous before God; but we are unable to fulfil it ourselves. What we, however, could not do, He, as our surety, has done. The law demands a righteousness of us; this is the end at which it aims, but we cannot effect it. Christ has done it for us, and is become the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth. With this the law is satisfied, and, like the avenger of blood, pursues the sinner only till he takes
 1 refuge

refuge in Christ; in him the believer finds a sanctuary, and the law retires, satisfied and well pleased for his righteousness sake.

We have only now to shew, in the

Third place, That this righteousness is given to every believer; or, that it is by faith we become interested therein.

The righteousness wrought out by Jesus is freely given to the believer; so St. Paul says, Rom. v. 16. "the judgement was by one (offence) to condemnation, but *the free gift* is of many offences to justification."

If it be asked, How can the righteousness of another be made ours? We answer, in the same manner that our sins were made Christ's, that is, by imputation. Christ, who had no sin of his own, was made sin for us; reckoned as a sinner, and dealt with as such: so we, who have no righteousness of our own, are made the righteousness of God, *in him*—not in ourselves. The sins of the elect were not inherent in Christ, but put to his account; so the righteousness of Christ is not inherent in us, but imputed to us; and God is graciously pleased to deal with us accordingly: he treats us as if we had not sinned, and accepts us as perfectly righteous, so that there is no condemnation whatever to us.

The nature of this may be learned from the dealings of mankind with one another. We read in St. Paul's Epistle to Philemon, to whom he wrote in behalf of Onesimus, a runaway servant, who was afterwards converted, desiring him to receive him again—"if he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, faith Paul, *impute it to me*;" put it to my account. And thus it is

is with bondsmen, or sureties, who make themselves liable to pay the debt of another; what they pay is imputed to the person for whom they are bound, and he is reckoned to have paid it, by them: and thus as a plain man expresses it, "the gospel is nothing but good news—that a rich man is come into the country, to pay poor people's debts."

Now this glorious gift of righteousness becomes our's by faith; it is therefore called "the righteousness of faith;" and "the righteousness of God, which is by faith; and which is to, and upon, all that believe." Hence, also, we are said to be "justified by faith;" and "to be saved by grace, through faith."

The person who has been convinced of sin by the law, alarmed by his sense of danger, led to seek for salvation, and enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, gladly receives this gift of righteousness. He sees no other way. He is pleased with this way. He receives this righteousness, and relies upon it for his acceptance with God.

We must always remember, that the only person who can or will receive this righteousness, is one who has been convinced that he is unrighteous in himself; and who is looking out for deliverance from that state in which the law leaves him. He hears the proposal of the gospel; assents to it as true; delights in it as good; renounces all other ways of obtaining relief, and heartily consents to be saved by grace alone. This is that faith frequently described in the scripture by receiving Christ—coming to Christ, and trusting in Christ.

APPLICA-

APPLICATION

And now, my dear friends, consider, I beseech you, the great importance of this subject. That great Reformer, *Luther*, said, that "justification by faith is that article on which the whole church must stand or fall." It was the pillar of the Reformation. It is the leading doctrine of the Church of England. In one of the 39 Articles, which you will do well to read, this grand truth is thus expressed: "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." The prayer book speaks the same language. Perhaps you may remember these expressions: — "O Lord God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do." Again, "We lean only on the hope of thy heavenly grace." In another place, "We do not presume to come to this thy table, trusting in our own righteousness."

Take also a few passages from the book of Homilies. "Man cannot make himself righteous by his own works, neither in whole nor in part; for that were the greatest arrogancy and presumption of man, that Antichrist could set up against God, to affirm, that man might, by his own works, take away his sins, and so justify himself." In another place we have these excellent words, "Christ is now become the righteousness of all them that do truly believe in him; He, for them, paid the ransom by his death; He, for them, fulfilled the law in his life." Once more, "This righteousness, which we so receive of God's mercy, and Christ's merits, embraced by faith, is taken, accepted, and allowed of God, our perfect and full justification."

Think

Think of this matter with respect to yourselves.— You must die. You must appear before a holy God who hates sin, and has declared that the soul that sinneth shall die. Are you not asking,—“Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and appear before the most high God?” You have now heard. Not by works of righteousness which you have done. These are imperfect and insufficient. The best of them is mixed with sin. Trust not to them. Renounce them all, and say with St. Paul, “Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but dung and dross, that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, by faith.” If you trust to any thing else, you “frustrate,” as much as you can, “the grace of God,” and in effect say, that “Christ died in vain.” This is a blasphemy that you do not intend, but all self-righteousness speaks this horrid language. Remember what is written, 1 Cor. iii. 11, “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. This alone can bear the weight of a sinner’s salvation; every other will give way when the storm comes, and bury the builder in its ruins.

But I hope better things of you, my brethren, even the things which accompany salvation. I hope you are convinced of sin, and also of righteousness; that you are hungering and thirsting after it. Be of good comfort. It is the gift of God, freely bestowed, without any deservings on the part of the sinner. “Ask, and ye shall receive. Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” Pray to God for faith. It is the work of the holy Spirit to produce it. Faith cometh by hearing. Continue to hear his word; and expect, that, in waiting upon God, he will enable you to mix faith with it, that so it may profit your soul.

Have

Have any of you, my brethen, put on the Lord Jesus? Is he the foundation of your hopes? Is his righteousness the rock on which you build? the wedding garment in which you resolve to appear before him? I call upon you to rejoice. Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. Blessed is your heart, for therewith ye have believed unto salvation. Now you may say with the Church, (Hail. lxi. 10.) "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness?"—"A robe, that hides every sin, which in thought, word, or deed, I have committed. A robe, which screens from the sword of justice, the curse of the law, and all the vengeance which my iniquities have deserved. A robe, which adorns and dignifies my soul; renders it fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." Happy Believer! go on thy way rejoicing. The sting of death is gone. Who shall condemn thee? God hath justified thee. Thou knowest in whom thou hast believed; and he will assuredly keep that which thou hast committed unto him. Wear this righteousness as thy breast-plate. It shall guard thy heart from fear, in sickness and in death; yea, thus defended, thou shalt appear with boldness in the presence of God. Filled with holy joy and gratitude, let thy lips and life proclaim the same faith which justifies the soul, sanctifies the heart; that this doctrine is according to godliness; and that "the grace of God which bringeth salvation, teacheth thee to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously, soberly and godly in this present evil world." Let the following lines be the sincere language of every soul:

"Be all my heart, and all my ways,
Directed to thy single praise;
And let my glad obedience prove
How much I owe, how much I love."

The LAW and GOSPEL distinguished:

The Law commands, and makes us know,
What duties to our God we owe;
But 'tis the Gospel must reveal
Where lies our strength to do his will.

The Law discovers guilt and sin,
And shews how vile our hearts have been;
Only the Gospel can express
Forgiving love and cleansing grace.

What curses doth the Law denounce
Against the man that fails but once?
But in the Gospel Christ appears,
Pard'ning the guilt of num'rous years.

My soul, no more attempt to draw
Thy life and comfort from the Law:
Fly to the hope the Gospel gives:
The man that trusts the promise lives.

WATTS.

5 DE60

The Fall of Man.



S E R M O N,

O N

ECCL. vii. 29.

God made man upright ; but they have sought out many inventions.

THESE are the words of Solomon, the King of Israel; and appear to be the result of much observation and experience. Possessed of superior talents, and placed in the highest station, he resolved to attain the utmost degree of wisdom; but his success was not equal to his wishes. He perceived, however, the extreme folly of having so many wives and concubines; and says, verse 28,—“One man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found;” that is, among his courtiers and flatterers, one man, perhaps, among a thousand, he found on whom he could depend; but not one among his thousand wives and concubines. “But this only, saith he, have I found—that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.” This he was sure of. He had no doubt respecting this; and to this apostacy of man he traces up the evils he saw and felt.

SERM. V.

E

These

These words represent two things—namely,

The original and apostate state of man.

First, Let us consider the *original* state of man.
 “God made man upright.”

Man, signifies the first man, Adam; the father and head of all men; in whom the whole human race was included. God *made* him; formed him out of the dust of the earth; and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, Gen. ii. 7. God made him *upright*; this does not mean in his bodily stature, but in the frame and disposition of his mind. “God created man in his own image, in his own likeness.” He was naturally and habitually righteous. His heart was properly disposed towards God; with a love of good, and a hatred of evil. The law was not written for him in tables of stone, but it was written upon his heart.

His *mind* was endued with true knowledge, (Col. iii. 2.) He knew his Maker. He knew his glorious perfections; his power, his wisdom, his holiness, and his goodness. He knew his relation to God, his duty to him, and his dependence on him. He saw the glory and goodness of God in his works. He studied them, that he might glorify God in them; hence we find him giving names to the creatures, which, in the original, shew that he had observed them, and understood their nature.

His *will* was conformed to the will of God. It had no such bias to evil as we now have; but it was disposed to comply with the divine will in all respects.

The *affections* of his soul were holy and heavenly. He loved God above all. He considered him as the
 supreme

supreme good, and the grand source of his happiness. He loved the creatures for God's sake; and all the beauty or sweetness he found in them, led him to adore and love his God the more.

In this state, man was truly blessed and honourable. His mind was calm. His conscience was easy. He knew no guilt. He felt no shame. He was a stranger to fear. No angry passions disturbed his soul. His body was free from disease and pain. He conversed with God, and was as happy as Paradise could make him.

Had he continued in his state of uprightness for a certain time, he would, probably, have been translated, without pain or death, to a heavenly state, still happier; and all his posterity would have been confirmed in the same condition of holiness and happiness, without the danger of falling, as he did: for as it is certain, that all mankind, descended from Adam, are involved in the consequences of his fall; we may justly conclude, that had he maintained his integrity, they would all have shared in the happy fruit of it. But alas! though "God made man upright; he hath sought out many inventions." "The crown is fallen from his head, the glory is departed from him." This is a point which it greatly concerns us to know. This is one of the first principles of our religion, on which all the rest depend. "For if man is not at variance with his Creator, what need of a *Mediator*? If he be not *depraved* and *undone*, what necessity of a *Restorer* and *Saviour*? If he is not *enslaved* to sin, why is he *redeemed* by Jesus Christ? If he is not *polluted*, why must he be *washed* in the blood of the *Lamb*? If his soul is not *disordered*, what occasion is there for a divine *Physician*? In a word, if he is not *born in sin*, why is a *new birth* so necessary, that Christ solemnly declares, without it no man can "see the kingdom

dom of God?"—Let us then attend, in the second place, to

The present apostate state of man.

Satan, full of hatred to God, and envying the happiness of man, devised the method of his destruction, with infernal cunning. He assaulted "the weaker vessel" first; questioned, and then denied the word of God; represented the command not to eat of the tree, as very severe; and the eating of it as quite harmless, yea, as highly advantageous. "Ye shall not surely die," said the devil; though God had said, "Ye shall surely die." Thus Eve was deceived, and became the unhappy means of seducing her husband. Thus both our first parents fell from their original state of purity and bliss; and as a token of God's dreadful displeasure, were banished from the garden of Eden.

But you must observe, that in and by this fall of our first parents, all their posterity likewise fell. So, St. Paul assures us, Rom. v. 12. "By one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" and again, verse 15, "through the offence of one, many are dead:" and again, verse 18, "by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation."

In consequence of our fall in Adam, our nature is wholly corrupt. Our hearts are naturally carnal and worldly. We forsake God, the foundation of happiness; and vainly strive to make ourselves happy in sin and folly; or, as our text has it—"we have sought out many inventions"—many vain reasonings—many foolish questions and speculations! We may read our depravity in our misery. In our present fallen state we can relish only earthly things, and they all conspire to disappoint our expectations. What are the num-
berless

berless inventions of men, but weak and wicked attempts to procure happiness without God, and contrary to his will. What inventions to please the imagination! Hence the loads of novels which burden the world, and are read and relished far better than the word of truth. What inventions to delight the eyes! Hence plays, and shows, and all the vanity of dress. What inventions to please the ear! Hence all the charms of music, vocal and instrumental. What inventions to gratify the taste! Hence all the art of cookery, collecting niceties from every quarter of the world. Of how many may it be said, that their kitchen is their temple, the cook their priest, and their belly their god. What inventions are there to kill time! Short as life is, and we all complain it is so short, it drags on too slowly for many. Hence the various amusements, especially playing at cards, invented on purpose to kill time. Ah, how soon will these murderers of time wish for one of their lost hours, when time with them shall be no more! What inventions are there to gratify pride! What contrivances to make us look greater and finer than our neighbours! What inventions to become rich and great! for this, men spend all their strength, and risk their health and life. What inventions to deceive one another, and to appear what we really are not!

But there are worse inventions still in matters of religion. What inventions of doctrine! how many teach, for divine truth, the commandments of men! What inventions in the worship of God! Hence all idolatry and superstition; hateful to God, and hurtful to man. What inventions as to the way of acceptance with God! There is but one true way, and that is Christ; but instead of this, men have invented a thousand ways; pretending by their own virtue, goodness, morality, charity, and devotion, to recommend themselves to God.

Not to dwell any longer on the word "inventions," let us take a general view of man in his fallen state.

See, what ignorance veils his mind ! How wretched and near to the state of brute beasts are millions of the human race ; the Indians of America, and the Blacks of Africa ! Yea, even in Europe, which is more enlightened ; and in England too ; a country full of churches and bibles ! O how many thousands are in darkness and the shadow of death ! Yes, even many of those who are scholars, are wise enough in worldly things, know not God, know not themselves, know not Jesus Christ. How many that seem to be religious, worship an "unknown God," being ignorant of their fallen state, and therefore ignorant of the salvation of the Redeemer.

But ignorance is not all. Consider the *carnality* of the mind. The heart is gone from God. It does "not like to retain God in its knowledge." How many are saying to God, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways : " and say, my brethren, Is it not so with some of you ? Why else is it that you do not love prayer ? Why do you neglect the bible ? Why do you break the sabbath ? Why do you take pleasure in the company of the wicked, while you laugh at serious people, and true piety ? Your conscience sometimes smites you for this, for you know they are right, and you are wrong : and were you on a dying bed, you would gladly be in their state. You have an immortal soul, which you know must be saved for ever, or lost for ever, and yet you live as if you had no soul at all. And though religion be the great business of man, it is the only business that you neglect ; it is the only business that you hate to see others mind. And does not this convince you that you are carnal indeed ?

Even

"Even a child is known by his doings;" "foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child," Prov. xx. 2. xxii. 15. Have you never observed the envy, pride, and passion of little children? They could not learn these evil tempers from others. They brought them into the world with them. They were born in sin.

Look at young people. The seeds of sin which were in their nature spring up and grow apace. The bud of vice now begins to blow. See the forward, rash youth, full of pride and self-conceit, despising his parents, impatient of controul, bursting every bond, that he may pursue his pleasures; and determined to indulge his lusts, though at the expence of health, character, and life itself. O who can lament, as it deserves, the shameful, the worse than brutal lewdness of both sexes? This vice awfully prevails; and though some may laugh at it, and think it a little sin, let them know, that "whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Heb. xiii. 4.

What shall we say of *prophaneness*? "Because of swearing the land mourneth;" England groans under the burden of this horrid crime, this unprofitable vice; the streets, the roads, the fields, the ale-houses, ring with the horrid language of hell. The throat of the swearer is "an open sepulchre," belching forth, in oaths and curses, a stench more hateful to God than the smell of a human carcase to man. This is so common, that we almost forget its criminality; but what saith the law? "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." Surely this is a sin, which, above most others, shews that man is wofully fallen and wicked; or how could he practise, how could he love, this unprofitable vice?

Time

Time would fail us to speak of a thousand other evils which proceed out of the heart. Read the catalogue given by our Saviour himself, Mat. xx. 19, "Evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemy; these come forth from the heart, and they defile the man."

The scriptures abound with testimonies to this sad truth. Read the following, Gen. vi. 5, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; and it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." See also Gen. viii. 21, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Read also, Job, xi. 12, "Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt?" and chap. xv. 14, "What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" And lest any should think that all people are not so bad, and that these things are said only of openly wicked persons, observe what the following scripture declares, Psalm xiv. 2, 3, "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are *all* gone aside; they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good: no, *not one*." In a word, see the true picture of fallen man, in Jerem. xvii. 9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

Thus, then, is this terrible, but useful truth, fully confirmed. None can deny it, without denying the word of God. But if these testimonies are not enough, turn your eyes to the state of mankind in this present evil world; and you will find sad proof that man is in a fallen state. "How astonishing is the quantity of
misery

mifery in the world ! How many thoufands are rend-
ing the air with the cry of pain or wretchednefs !
Strange, that ever there fhould be fo much ; that
there fhould be any fuffering in the creation of a good
God ! Doubtlefs there is a caufe for it ; and if the
Bible had not told us what it is, we fhould be for ever
in the dark. O, Adam, what haft thou done ! O, man,
what art thou always doing ! Is not “ the earth cursed
for man’s fake ? ” and why doth it bring forth fo plen-
tifully thorns and briars, while ufeul plants, and fruit,
and grain, cannot be produced without great labour ?
The earth itfelf preaches to us this humbling doctrine ;
and while man gains his daily bread with the fweat of
his brow, let him learn that fin is the fatal caufe.

Sometimes the earth is deluged with dangerous
floods ; at other times it is hardened by exceffive
drought. Dreadful peals of thunder fhake the hea-
vens ; fearful flafhes of lightning fill the fkies. Hor-
rible earthquakes cleave the ground, and open a fud-
den grave for thoufands. Burning mountains belch
forth their deftructive contents. The feas, raifed to
fury by ftormy winds, bury the poor helpless feamen.
Terrible plagues fweep away whole cities in a few
days. What is the language of thefe fearful meffen-
gers ? They all unite to fay, Man is fallen, and God
is angry.

Confider alfo the forrows of mothers in bringing
forth their offspring ; the cries, and tears, and pains,
and death of little babes. Think of the various fierce
and agonizing difeafes of mankind. What is the world
but a huge hofpital ? and where almoft the houfe that
there is not one fick ? How many of our poor fellow
creatures are pining in poverty, or racked with pain,
or raving with madnefs ? Turn your eyes to the dying
bed of a fellow mortal. Look at his ghafly counte-
nance

nance. See how he is convulsed; how he labours for life. At last, with a mournful groan, he bids adieu to this wretched world. Behold the pale and lifeless corpse. In a few days, perhaps in a few hours, it begins to change. Putrefaction seizes it; and the body, once so dear and pleasant, the parent, the wife, and the child, must be "buried out of our sight;" must be consigned to the dark, cold, and loathsome grave, to become the prey of sordid worms. What a terrible proof does all this afford of our sinful state!

IMPROVEMENT.

And now what shall we say to these things? Is this the state of man? How necessary is it that he should know it. We observed at the beginning, that it is one of the first principles of our religion, and without knowing this, we cannot understand the rest.— "When the veil is upon the heart, the veil is upon every thing." There are three things, the absolute necessity of which we may learn from what has been said, namely, *Redemption*, *Repentance*, and *Regeneration*.

1. *Redemption*. God hates sin with infinite abhorrence. Sin renders us abominable in his sight. "The wages of sin is death." "He will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil." How then can we escape the damnation of hell? Blessed be God, he hath so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son to be our Redeemer and Saviour. Jesus Christ has died for sinners, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." By his blood, reconciliation is made for iniquity; and by his Spirit our nature is renewed; so that we may be fully restored to the favour and image of God. "O Jesus, what hast thou not done to loosen guilt and pain,

pain, to sweeten adversity, to blunt the sting of death, to restore happiness in some degree to the earth, and ensure it in eternity."

2. See also the need of *Repentance*, or such a sight and sense of sin as leads to godly sorrow and self-abhorrence. "Sin is the only thing that God hates, and almost the only thing that man loves;" but grace will make us hate it heartily, and ourselves on account of it. Alas, how far from this are many, who yet call themselves christians! Hear the proud Pharisee crying, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are;" or boasting that he has a good heart, and a clear conscience; that he does his duty to the best of his power, and never hurt any body in all his life. This is the wretched cant of poor deluded souls, who know not "the plague of their own heart." God forbid this should be our case. Let us rather, like the good men we read of in scripture, confess our sins, loathe ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes. Then shall we thankfully receive the free mercy and forgiving love of God through Jesus Christ.

3. From hence also we learn the necessity of *Regeneration*. Nothing short of this is sufficient; for "striving against nature is like holding a weathercock with one's hand; as soon as the force is taken off it veers again with the wind." If we are born in sin, we must be born again. So our Saviour solemnly declared to Nicodemus, John iii. 3, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." We must have a new heart; that is, a new disposition of heart; such a change within as may be justly called a new creation. And this is far more than the baptism of water. We must be "born of water and of the Holy Ghost;" that is, we must experience the power of the Spirit on
our

our minds, which is like that of water on the body, to cleanse and purify it from sin. Water, in baptism, is "the outward visible sign," but there is also, "an inward and spiritual grace;" and this is, "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." The regenerate person hates sin, and earnestly desires deliverance from it. The sincere language of the soul is—"Go, Sin; go for ever, thou rebel to God; thou crucifier of Christ; thou griever of the Spirit; thou curse of the earth; thou poison in my blood; thou plague of my soul, and bane of all my happiness."

How important then is the knowledge of our fallen state? "It is the devil's master-piece to make us think well of ourselves." It is God's great and gracious work to discover to us our true condition. May the Holy Spirit so bless what has now been said concerning it, that discovering the disease of our nature, we may highly prize the great physician of our souls; may lie low before a holy God in the dust of humiliation: yet looking up for pardoning mercy, and for sanctifying grace, daily to renew us in the spirit of our mind; till being made meet for heaven, we are admitted into that blessed state, where sin and sorrow shall be known no more; and where, with all the redeemed, we shall celebrate our glorious recovery from the ruins of the fall, ascribing salvation to God and the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen.

5 DE60

REDEMPTION.



SERMON,

ON

EPHESIANS, i. 6.

In whom we have Redemption through his Blood.

THE word *Redemption* is perhaps the most comprehensive that our own language, or any other, can afford. Redemption itself is certainly the greatest blessing that God can bestow, or man receive. 'Tis this that strikes the joyful strings of the heavenly harpers. This is the burden of that ever-new song which none but the Redeemed can sing—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

The salvation of man, under whatever name it is described, always supposes his fallen, guilty, ruined, and helpless state: nor can we understand one word of the gospel aright without knowing this. He is dangerously diseased: Christ is the physician, and salvation his cure. He is naked: Christ covers him with his righteousness. He is famished: Christ is his meat and drink. He is in darkness: Christ is his light. He stands at the bar, accused, and ready to be condemned: Christ appears as his surety, and pleads his righteousness for his justification. So here in the text, *Man*

SERM. VI.

F

is

is in bondage: Christ pays the ransom, and procures his discharge.

Come then, my friends, and let us attend to this great subject; and remember, that we are fixing our minds on the same delightful theme that engages the hearts and harps of glorified saints; and which will employ our grateful tongues to all eternity, if we are found among the ransomed of the Lord.

Redemption, among men, is the deliverance of persons out of a state of captivity and bondage, by an act of power, or rather by the payment of a price, for their ransom. The recovery of God's chosen people from the ruins of the fall is therefore described by this term; because they are, by nature, in a wretched state of bondage and slavery; from which they could never deliver themselves; and in which, if not delivered, they must perish for ever. But Christ, the Son of God, out of his infinite love and compassion, undertook the deliverance; and by paying down a sufficient price, even his own precious blood, as a ransom, delivered them from ruin, and restored them to liberty.

That we may better understand this redemption of lost man, let us consider—*His captivity—his helplessness—and, the means of his deliverance.*

Consider, first, the state of man as a captive and a slave. Captives, among men, are persons taken in war and made prisoners. In many cases they have been used very ill; put to shame; doomed to hard labour; confined in chains, prisons, or mines; led at the chariot wheels of their conquerors; and sometimes put to death in a wanton and cruel manner. To this day the poor Blacks are treated as captives, and kept in a state of bondage. Ships are sent from England and other countries to Africa, on purpose to get
I
hundreds

hundreds and thousands of them for slaves. They are stolen, or procured under various and wicked pretences; torn from the bosoms of their dearest relations; forced away from their own country; closely stowed together in a ship; and, when brought to the West-Indies, sold like beasts in a market. They are then doomed to hard labour, and often to cruel usage; till death puts an end to their miseries, or their liberty is obtained by paying a sum of money for it. In such a case, a man may be said to be redeemed; and, ceasing to be a slave, he becomes a freeman. This may give us some idea of the nature of Redemption. When God made man he made him upright: he made him free; but he soon lost his liberty. Satan attacked him, and prevailed against him; and not against him only, but against all his posterity. In this state we are born; in this we live; and in this we die and perish, unless the Redemption of Christ is applied to our souls by the Holy Spirit. You would pity a number of poor captives if you saw them in heavy chains; if you saw them stripped of their clothing, robbed of their wealth; or sold like beasts; if you saw them cruelly abused and beaten, and pining to death in pain and misery. Well, this is our own state by nature. We are conquered by Satan; far removed from our original happy condition; deprived of our true riches, the image and favour of God; tied and bound with the chains of our sins; basely employed by the devil in the horrid drudgery of our lusts; and, if grace prevent it not, liable to be summoned by death into an awful eternity, to receive the wages of our sin, which is eternal misery.

From this sad condition we cannot deliver ourselves. We have neither the will nor the power. It is the peculiar misery of sinful man that he knows not his misery. Other captives groan for freedom. Even a bird or a beast, deprived of liberty, struggles to get

free; but more wretched and stupid sinners deny that they are slaves; and foolishly boast, like the Jews, "that they were never in bondage to any man." They hug their yoke; they love their prison, and fancy music in the rattling of their chains. If any here are in this condition, may God open their eyes, and deliver them from the sad infatuation!

But if a man had a *will* to be free he has not the *power*. What ransom can he offer? Can he make satisfaction to the injured law of God? Can he render back to his Maker the glory of which he has robbed him? Or can he restore to his own soul the image of God, which is lost and spoiled by sin? Can he renew his sinful nature to holiness, or make himself a new creature? No; it is impossible. If the heart of God do not pity; if the hand of God do not help; he must die a slave, and be the eternal companion of his cruel tyrant, and fellow-slaves in the prison of hell.

But blessed be God for Jesus Christ! When there was no eye to pity, no hand to help, his own almighty arm brought salvation. The Son of God, touched with compassion for perishing man, descended from his throne of glory, and visited our wretched abode; and, because those whom he came to redeem were partakers of flesh and blood, "he also himself took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage," Heb. ii. 14, 15.

Among the Jews, the right of redemption belonged to the kinsman. Jesus Christ, in order to redeem us, became a man, the kinsman of our nature, "bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh;" "for both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one; for
which

whic
Heb

T
pric
was
who
so S
deen
but
mea
as th
capt
men
inva
the

H
desc
und
Th
Fle
Fro

I
Th
see
rec
are
cap
O
me
nes
us
wh
one
in
the

which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,"
Heb. ii. 11.

The Redemption of captives is usually by paying a price or ransom. This Christ paid, and the price was no less than his blood; so says our text—"In whom we have redemption through his blood." And so St. Paul speaks, 1 Eph. i. 18, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ;"—not by so mean a price as the perishing riches of this world, such as the silver and gold, which are paid for buying poor captives out of bondage, misery, and slavery among men; but it was at no less a price than the noble and invaluable precious blood, sufferings, and death of the Son of God.

Having taken a *general* view of Redemption, let us descend to some particulars by which we may better understand the subject, and be more affected with it. The natural man is a captive of the *Devil*—of the *Flesh*—of the *World*—of the *Law*—and of the *Grave*. From all these Christ delivers his people.

1. We are all, by nature, captives of the *Devil*. This may seem to you a hard saying, but it is too true; see the proof of it in 2 Tim. ii. 26,—“that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, who are taken captives by him at his will”—taken alive, as captives of war, to be enslaved and ruined by the Devil. O how dreadful is the power of Satan over wicked men! They are not aware of it, or they would earnestly pray, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,” or the evil one. St. John says, “The whole world lieth in wickedness, or in the wicked one,” 1 John v. 19; and St. Paul says, “He worketh in the children of disobedience,” Eph. ii. 2. So that there is more truth in some common expressions, used

by wicked people than they are aware of; as when they say, "The Devil is in you." It is awfully true of all unconverted sinners. And it deserves notice, how such people continually sport with such words as these—Hell, and hellish—Devil, and devilish—Damn, and damnation. Surely these words show who is their master! and what is likely to be their place and portion. May God discover the evil of such things to all who practise them.

Now the blessed Redeemer came down from heaven, to destroy the works of the Devil. He overcame all his temptations in the wilderness; he triumphed over him on the cross; and when he ascended into heaven, "he led captivity captive;" conquered the conqueror, and bound the strong one. He shewed his power over devils, by casting them out of the *bodies* of men; and he still shews his power, by casting him out of the *souls* of all who believe in him. O that he may shew this power among us this moment.

Yes, my friends, if we are redeemed from Satan, we are "*redeemed to God*"—redeemed *to God*, as his peculiar property; for his honour and service; for communion with him now; and for the everlasting enjoyment of him in glory.

2. We are all, by nature, captives of the *Flesh*; our minds are fleshly; "Sin reigns in our mortal bodies; we obey it in the lusts thereof; our members are instruments of unrighteousness; we have yielded our members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity: for his servants we are to whom we obey," Rom. vi. 12, &c.

Is not this true, my friends? Are not some here present yet the slaves of sin; one of drunkenness; another of swearing; another of fornication; another of

of lying; another of thieving, or some other heinous sin? Ah, Sirs, "the end of these things is death:"—"for these things sake cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." Alas! how many are strong advocates for human liberty, who are themselves the slaves of corruption! "For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage," 2 Pet. ii. 19.

But, adored be Jesus, he came to "save us from our sins;" "that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." By the power of his Spirit, the people are "born again," and made "new creatures in Christ Jesus; old things pass away, and all things become new." They are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; they walk not according to the flesh; they are enabled to crucify the old man of sin, and to put on the new man of grace; and to live, in some degree, in that holiness without which no man can see the Lord. So St. Paul speaks to the converted Romans, "God be thanked, that (*though*) ye were the servants of sin; ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Rom. vi. 17, 18.

3. We are all, by nature, captives of the *World*: or, as the scripture expresses it,—“Walk according to the course of this world,” willingly carried along with the stream of sin, and foolishly thinking we shall do well, because we do like others; forgetting that “broad is the road that leadeth to death, and many there be that walk therein;” while the narrow way to life is found by very few. By nature we are conformed to the world; to its foolish customs, maxims, dress, and amusements; and also to its dangerous, mistaken

mistaken notions of religion. People are afraid to think for themselves; they take the religion of their neighbours on trust, without examining, by the word of God, whether it be right or wrong, true or false.

But our blessed Lord "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world," from the sins, snares, customs, and fashions of the men of this world. St. Peter speaks of being redeemed from "our vain conversation, received by tradition from our fathers." It matters not what we were brought up to, nor what our forefathers lived in: if it was wrong, we must forsake it. We must confess Christ before men, or he will deny us before angels: and we shall not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, if we know it to be the power of God to our own salvation; but rather glory in the cross of Christ, by which we are crucified to the world, and the world to us. Then we are the true disciples of Christ, when we are not of the world, even as he was not of the world.

4. We are all, as finners, captives and prisoners to the broken *Law* and offended *Justice* of God. The law justly demands of us, perfect and perpetual obedience. If we fail in one point, we are guilty of all; and fall under its fearful curse. The law demands our obedience or our blood. If we disobey but once, our lives are forfeited. We are condemned already; and, if death finds us in that state, it shuts us up for ever in hell.

But, glory be to the Lamb of God, that he came into the world to save finners; and as there could be no remission of sins but by the shedding of blood, he freely gave himself up for us, and died for our sins, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Thus he gave himself "a ransom" for us; and

and "redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. Hereby, all who believe in him are "delivered from the wrath to come." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them." They have passed from death unto life; and "who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." In consequence of this, they are entitled to peace of conscience, even the peace of God that passeth all understanding.

Finally, We are all, by reason of sin, doomed to *Death*, and shall shortly be prisoners of the *Grave*. This is the house appointed for all living; to this dark abode we must soon remove, and there remain till the great day, when there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust.

But the glorious Redeemer has said of his people, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction!" Yes, Jesus is made unto us redemption; namely, "the redemption of the body;" and "the creature itself," that is, the body, "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God," Rom. viii. 21. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

APPLICATION.

And now, my friends, what think you of Redemption? Does it appear to you a little or a great matter? How are your hearts affected with it? Do you know that

that you are, or once was, in this miserable bondage? You can never desire deliverance, nor love the deliverer, till you know this. When Israel was in Egypt, "they sighed by reason of their bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of their bondage." Again, when Israel was in Babylon, "they sat down by the rivers and wept; yea, they wept, when they remembered Zion." Depend upon it, if you never saw this to be your condition, it is your condition now. If you never sought redemption, you never partook of it. If you never saw any excellence and preciousness in Christ, you are yet "in the gall of bitterness, yet in the bond of iniquity." Be advised, when you go home, to retire to some secret place, and, on your bended knees, implore the blessed Redeemer to set you free. Say, with the Psalmist, "Draw nigh to my soul, and redeem it." Look thro' the bars of your prison to heaven. Cry to the Lord in your trouble, and he will save you out of your distresses. Hear him saying, "Wilt thou be made free?" He stands ready to knock off thy fetters, and set thee at liberty. If it was necessary for *you* to pay the price of redemption, you might well despair! but the price is paid; nothing on your part is wanting but a heart and a hand to receive it. Come then, for all things are ready. "Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption," Ps. cxxx. 7. Here is the sum of the gospel. Here are glad tidings of great joy to souls burdened with sin. Are you afflicted with a sense of your sin and misery? Well, there is hope in Israel concerning this. "Hope in the Lord;" not in yourselves, not in your own works, but in Jehovah; and your encouragement to do so is—"with him is mercy,"—grace, goodness, bounty. He is, of his own nature, disposed to forgive; and there is this further encouragement—"with him there is plenteous redemption." Christ has shed his precious blood as the ransom price.

The

The redemption is plenteous. The boundless stores of grace and mercy are fully equal to all your wants. Hope then in the Lord, and let your expectation be fixed alone in him; for "he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

And you who, through grace, have believed to the saving of your souls, come, and consider the sad state you were in; from which nothing could deliver you but the astonishing ransom of the Saviour's blood. O see the malignity of sin, in the Redeemer's bloody sweat in the garden, and in his dreadful pains on the cross. O see what sin has done! See and detest the murderer of thy gracious Lord. Hate it with a perfect hatred, and resolve to wage eternal war against it.

Come and meditate on the love of Christ, "who loved you, and gave himself for you;" and who has, by his Spirit, brought home the redemption to your heart. There was nothing good in you to engage him to do this; for "while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us." () be thankful for your wonderful deliverance. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy." Had a generous fellow-creature delivered you from Turkish slavery, or from a Spanish inquisition, how would you express your thanks? "O, Sir, would you say, I am under inexpressible obligations; I have not such another friend in all the world; I shall never forget your kindness while I live." But no earthly friend can redeem your soul from sin and hell. "O would to God, (said a holy man) I could cause paper and ink to speak the worth and excellency, the high and loud praises of our brother Ransomer! Oh, the Ransomer needs not my report; but if he would vouchsafe to take and use it, I should be happy if I had an errand to this world, but for some

some few years, to spread proclamations of the glory of the Ransomer, whose cloaths were wet and dyed in blood; if even, after that, my soul and body should return to their original nothing."

Thus, my friends, let us think of Christ; and thus thinking of him, let us shew our love by keeping his commandments; ever remembering, that "we are not our own, for we are bought with a price; therefore let us glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are God's." Remember you are yet in the body; a body of sin and death: and though, through grace, you "delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man, yet is there another law in your members, warring against the law of your mind." Watch against it then, lest at any time it should "bring you into captivity to the law of sin." Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free; and rejoice in hope of the complete, everlasting, and glorious liberty of the children of God in a better world.

5 DE60

Jes
u
t

T
Ch
no
ther
Y
div
right
ers
mix
the
be
-her
tha
tha
was
the
S

Regeneration, or the New Birth.



S E R M O N,

ON

JOHN, iii. 3.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

THE two grand truths of the Christian religion are, our ruin in Adam, and our recovery in Christ : and till we know both these, we can perform no duty, nor enjoy any privilege aright ; we can neither serve God here, nor enter into his glory hereafter.

You must have observed, that the Scripture always divides mankind into two classes—the wicked and the righteous ; sinners and saints ; believers and unbelievers ; heirs of hell and heirs of heaven. These are all mixed together on earth, but they will be separated at the day of judgment ; and their eternal state will then be fixed, according to what was their true character here. What then can be of greater importance to us than to know our real state at present ? And observe, that though there is that difference between men, which was just mentioned, we are all by nature in one and the same condition ; that is, sinners and children of

SERM. VII.

G

wrath.

wrath. So that, unless a change passes upon us, we continue in it, live and die in it, and are lost for ever.

This is the solemn truth, which Jesus Christ in our text declared to Nicodemus. Perhaps, you may like to know who he was, and how Christ came to say this to him. I will tell you. Nicodemus was a great man among the Jews. He was a teacher, and a ruler; and having heard that Jesus Christ had said and done many wonderful things, he came to him one night, being ashamed to come by day light, and said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God." Jesus Christ directly begins to teach Nicodemus; and he begins with the most important truth that was ever taught—The necessity of the new birth, which he asserts in the strongest manner possible; "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." As if he had said, I, who am the truth itself, assure you, that no man, considering his fallen and corrupt nature, can understand, or enjoy the blessings of that kingdom of grace which I am come to set up; nor can he enter the kingdom of glory to which it leads, unless his heart is changed by power from above.

It seems that Nicodemus did not, at first, rightly understand what our Lord meant by this; and he asked how it could be. But our Lord insists upon it again and again, and we doubt not that Nicodemus came to understand it at last, and really to become a new creature. The Lord grant that we also may become new creatures, so as to serve him here, and enjoy him hereafter!

The *new birth* signifies a great change, made in the heart of a sinner by the power of the Holy Spirit. It means that something is done in us, and for us, which we cannot do for ourselves; something, to which we were before strangers; something whereby we begin to live, as we did not live before; yea, something, whereby such a life begins as shall last for ever; for,

as

as by our first birth we are born to die, so by our second birth, we are born to live for ever.

That we may better understand the new birth, or this change of heart, let us more particularly consider,

I. The *nature* of this change ; and,

II. The *necessity* of it.

I. Let us consider the *nature* of this change. " It is not a change of the substance and faculties of the soul. Sin did not destroy the essence of the soul, but its rectitude ; so grace does not give a new faculty, but a new quality. It is not destroying the metal, but the old stamp upon it, to imprint a new one. It is not breaking the candlestick, but putting a new light in it. It is a new stringing the instrument, to make new harmony."

It is a *great* change: or else, such a term as " the new birth ;" or, " a new creation ;" or, " a resurrection," would not be proper. When a child is born, its way of existing, and of getting nourishment, is quite different from what it was before : so by the new birth, we live in a very different manner. The greatness of this change is elsewhere described by " passing from darkness to light ;" yea, by " passing from death to life." " You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." It makes a man quite the contrary to what he was before ; as contrary as East to West ; North to South ; light to darkness ; flesh to spirit. It is such a change, as if a Blackmoor should become white ; or a lion become a lamb. In a word, God takes away the heart of stone, and gives an heart of flesh.

It is an *universal* change—" a new creature ;" a complete creature ; not a monster, with some human parts, and others wanting. It is *God's* work, and therefore perfect in its parts ; though there is room for

growth in every part, as in a new born child. O, let us not deceive ourselves with a *partial* change; such as taking up some new opinion, or joining a new sect; or leaving off some old sins, and performing some moral or religious duties. The common changes of age and life may occasion some partial alteration; but this is a change of *the whole man*. In the *understanding* there is light instead of darkness. In the *will* there is softness instead of hardness. In the *affections* there is love instead of enmity.

It is an *inward* change. It will indeed produce an outward change, if the life was before immoral; but there may be strict morality, without this inward change. Reformation is not Regeneration, though too often mistaken for it. It is a change of *heart*. We must be "renewed in the spirit of our mind," Eph. iv. 23. "Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looketh at the heart." God has promised to give his people "a new heart;" and the penitent Psalmist prays for it—"Create in me a clean heart, O God! and renew a right spirit within me." Without this there is no true change. "The spring and wheels of a clock must be mended before the hand of the dial will stand right. It may stand right twice in the day, when the time of the day comes to it, but not from any motion or rectitude in itself. So a man may seem by one or two actions, to be a changed man; but the inward spring being amiss, it is but a deceit." There is a great difference between virtue and religion; between morality and holiness. Many people abstain from some sins, and perform some duties, for the sake of health, reputation, or profit; but in the new creature there is a change of *principle*. The principle of a new creature is faith; "faith working by love;" and this abides. He is not like a clock that is wound up, and goes only while it is acted upon by the weight; but, having the Spirit of God within him, and the life of God in his soul, grace is

as "a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."

There is in the new creature a change of the *end* he has in view, as well as the *principle* from which he acts. "The glory of God is the end of the new man: *Self* is the end of the old man." Nothing is a greater evidence of being born again, than to be taken off the old centre of self, and to aim at the glory of God in every thing; whether we eat or drink; whether we are in private or public; whether we are engaged in religious or in common affairs; to desire and aim sincerely at the glory of God; knowing that "we are not our own, but bought with a price, we are to glorify God with our body, soul, and spirit, all which are his."

That the new birth is such a change as has been described, namely, a *great* change, an *universal* change, and an *inward* change, will still more plainly appear if you consider the alteration it makes in a person's views and apprehensions. He has new thoughts of God, of *himself*, of the world, of *eternity*, of *Jesus Christ*, and of *all divine ordinances*.

He has new thoughts of *God*. Before, he lived, in a great measure, "without God in the world;" without any true knowledge of God; without any proper regard to God; and was ready to think God "altogether such an one as himself." But now he sees that with God there is "terrible majesty," perfect purity, strict justice, and that he is indeed greatly to be feared. Now he knows that God's eye is always upon him; and that if he were to enter into judgment with him, he could never stand. But he learns also, from the gospel, that God in Christ is full of grace, and goodness, and love; so that, "he fears the Lord and his goodness."

The new creature has very different thoughts of *himself*. He once acted as his own master; followed his own wicked will; was ready to excuse his worst

actions; thought lightly of his sins, perhaps gloried in his shame. Now he sees the evil of his former ways; he mourns sincerely for his sins; he sees the badness of his heart from whence they flowed; he ranks himself among the chief of sinners; he wonders at his former boldness in sin; and he wonders more at the patience of God in not cutting him off with some sudden stroke of his judgment. In short, he cries, "Behold, I am vile. I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes!"

The new creature has new thoughts of the *world*; of the *men* of it, and of the *things* of it. Once, he loved the company of profane and unclean persons; now he shuns them as he would the plague; and his language is, "Depart from me, ye wicked men, for I will keep the commandments of my God." Before, he hated the very sight of a godly person; now, his hearts unites with those who fear the Lord; he thinks them "the excellent of the earth," wishing to live and die with them. How different also are his views of the things of the world! Once they were his only portion. He sighed to be great; he longed to be rich; he panted for pleasure. Eating and drinking, cards and plays, music and dancing, or some other vain amusements, were his dear delight; and to enjoy these he would sacrifice every thing. Now he sees the vanity of them all. He sees their danger. They had led him to the brink of ruin; and now he can truly say,

"These pleasures now no longer please,
 • No more delight afford:
 Far from my heart be joys like these,
 Now I have known the Lord!"

But O, what new apprehensions has he of *Eternity*! He hardly ever used to think of it; now it is almost always on his mind; for now he has that *faith* which is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Now, therefore, he looks not at things

things that are seen, for he knows they are temporal ; but at the things which are not seen, for they are eternal. He knows that he must live for ever ; either in a glorious heaven, or in a dreadful hell. Compared, therefore, with eternal concerns, all worldly things appear as empty shadows, and he considers every thing below, according to the relation it bears to his eternal happiness.

The new creature has also very different thoughts of *Jesus Christ* from what he had before. Once he was without form and comeliness to him ; now he appears " the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." He did not wish to hear of him, or read of him, or speak of him, except to profane his name ; now he can never hear enough of him ; for he sees, that if ever he is saved, he owes it all to Jesus ; and therefore " counts all things but loss, that he may know him, and win him, and be found in him."

He also thinks very differently of *religious ordinances*. He could not bear to keep the sabbath holy. Either he wholly neglected public worship, and took his carnal pleasure ; or if he came it was a burden : he did not join in prayer ; singing, at best, was an amusement ; he disregarded the word preached, perhaps derided it ; and as for private prayer, he hated it. How great the change ! Now the Sabbath is his delight ; " the holy of the Lord and honourable." The house of God his home ; the word of God his food ; the Bible his dear companion ; and prayer the breath of his soul.

Thus you see what a change has taken place in his *views* ; and, if time permitted, we might shew that these *new views* are attended with *new affections* ; he loves what before he hated ; he hates what before he loved. He has new desires, new fears, new joys, and new sorrows. He makes new resolutions. He is employed in new labours. He has new entertainments. He

He has new hopes and prospects. How justly then is he called a new creature !

Having briefly shewn the *nature* of regeneration, let us consider,

H. The necessity of it. Observe how very strongly our Lord asserts in the text—" Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Surely, these words must have great weight with us, if we believe the God of truth. But you will ask. What is meant by the kingdom of God? I answer, it means the kingdom of grace upon earth, and the kingdom of glory in heaven. Now, without the new birth, no person whatever can see the kingdom of God. It is not said *he may not*, or *he shall not*, but *he cannot*; it is impossible in the nature of things.

With respect to the gospel state here, in which Christ reigns, no man can be a *true Christian* unless he is born again; he cannot be a true member of the church of Christ, or of that society which is governed by Christ; he cannot perform any of the duties required in this kingdom; nor can he enjoy any of the privileges bestowed in it.

He cannot perform any of the *duties*. Fallen man is ignorant of what is truly good. "He calls evil good, and good evil." He is "to every good work, reprobate," Tit. i. 16. And he has a dislike to that which is good. "The carnal mind is enmity against God," and shews its enmity by rebellion against the law of God, Rom. viii. 7. Now, remaining in this state, he cannot answer the end of his being, which is to glorify God; and having this unsuitness and unwillingness to answer that end, there is an absolute, an universal necessity for this change. It is "in Christ Jesus we are created to good works." We cannot "pray in the Spirit," till we are "born of the Spirit;"

we cannot "sing with grace in our hearts," till we have grace; "we cannot worship God in the spirit," while we are in the flesh. A dead sinner cannot present "a living sacrifice." The duties of a natural man are lifeless and selfish; "he cannot serve God spiritually," because he is carnal; nor graciously, for he is corrupt; nor vitally, because he is dead; nor freely, for he is enmity against God; nor delightfully, for his heart is alienated; nor sincerely, for his heart is deceit; nor acceptably, "for he that is in the flesh cannot please God."

In like manner, the unregenerate person cannot enjoy any of the blessed *privileges* of the gospel state. He knows nothing of the joys of salvation. He is a stranger to the peace of the gospel. He has no relish for the sincere milk of the word. He cannot delight in prayer; nor enjoy communion with God, or communion with the saints, for things that are not natural can never be delightful. And this also makes it plain, that

The unrenewed man cannot see the kingdom of glory. The new birth does not indeed entitle a person to heaven, but it makes him "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." The unrenewed sinner is shut out from heaven by the unalterable determination of God himself, who has declared, that "nothing which defileth" shall enter that place, and that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

And if you consider what the joys and employments of heaven are, and what the disposition of a sinner is, it will plainly appear that he cannot see the kingdom of God. "The happiness of heaven is holiness; and to talk of being happy without it, is as great nonsense, as to talk of being well without health, or being saved without salvation." People are ready to think, if they go to heaven they must be happy; but, without a new nature, a man might be as much out of his element in heaven, as a fish, out of the bottom of the sea, would be

be in a green meadow, or an ox in the bottom of the sea. Can a wicked man, who now hates the godly, expect to be happy among none but saints? Can he, who cannot keep three hours of the sabbath holy, bear to keep an eternal sabbath? Can he, who now curses and swears, imagine that his tongue shall be for ever employed in praising God? Can he, who now hates to think of God, love to employ his mind in the eternal contemplation of him? No, no. Hell is the sinner's "own place;" there he will have his own company, and, in some measure, his old employments, though without pleasure of them; but, as to heaven, he can never see it till he be born again.

APPLICATION.

From what was first said of the nature of the new birth, let us learn to avoid the common mistake, that baptism is regeneration. It is the sign of it, but not the thing itself. We must "be born of water and of the Spirit," John iii. 5; that is, of the Holy Spirit, whose grace is, to the soul, what water is to the body. Take not the shadow for the substance. Can baptism change the heart? Has it changed *yours*? Say, poor sinner, how is it with you? Conscience will tell you, "Old things are not passed away; all things are not become new." Do any of you live in drunkenness, profaneness, sabbath-breaking, whoredom, or any other sin? Or do you live unconcerned about your soul, careless about salvation, without Christ, without prayer? know for certain, that you are yet a stranger to this great and blessed change. And yet, without it, the God of truth assures you, it is impossible for you to be saved. You must be born again. Do not think that outward reformation, or morality, or religious professions, or religious duties, are sufficient. All these are far short of this inward spiritual change. You must

must be born again. As sure as there is a God in heaven you must be born again, or you can never go to heaven. And can you bear the thought of being shut out? Put the question to yourself. "Can I dwell with everlasting burnings? Can I endure eternal darkness? Can I bear to be eternally separated from the blessed God? Is my present sinful, sensual life to be preferred before eternal joys? Is there one text in the Bible to give me comfort in this state?" O that you may be so deeply convinced of the immediate necessity of this change, that you may, ere you sleep this night, fall down on your knees before God, and earnestly desire him to make you a new creature. He can do it in a moment; and he has promised his Holy Spirit to them that ask him. Say not, as the foolish do, I will not change my religion. Let me ask you a question, Has your religion changed you? If not, it is high time to change it. But do not be deceived by appearances, forms, and names. True religion is not the business of the lip or the knee, but of the heart. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink," or outward ceremonies; no; but it is within; it consists "in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Be advised also to read and hear his word, for this is the instrument which God employs in effecting this great change. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

And, as for you, who have experienced this blessed change, forget not to give the glory to God, and to take the comfort of it to yourselves. Are you born of God? then heaven is yours. The righteousness of Christ is your *title* to it, but herein is your *fitness* for it. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God: it follows therefore, that if he be born again he shall see it. Thank God for it. You are renewed for this very purpose, that you should shew forth his praise. God has made you to differ from the mass of mankind. He has done more for you than

than if he had made you kings and emperors ; for he has made you sons of God and heirs of glory ; " heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." Often reflect on your former state ; and admire the grace that has made the difference. God has given you his Spirit, and in him, a sure earnest of your heavenly inheritance. " He that wrought you for the self-same thing is God." O, be concerned to live and walk as renewed persons ; so shall you prove the reality of the change ; adorn the gospel, edify your neighbour, and glorify God.

5 DE60

IT
ance
that
for t
they
futu
perif
that
and
we p
and
will

S

REPENTANCE.



S E R M O N,

ON

MARK, vi. 12.

And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

IT is remarkable, that whatever different notions men have of religion, they all believe that repentance is necessary to salvation. But it may be feared, that many mistake its true nature, and take the shadow for the substance. There are also many, who, though they think it necessary, delay their repentance to some future period; and more than a few die without it, and perish in their sins. It is therefore of great importance that we should know wherein true repentance consists; and that we should be urged ourselves to repent, that we perish not. That repentance, then, which is true and genuine, and "needeth not to be repented of," will be found to include the four following things:

SERM. VIII.

H

I. Con-

- I. Conviction of sin.
- II. Contrition for sin.
- III. Confession of sin.
- IV. Conversion from sin.

I. The first thing that belongs to true repentance is a *conviction of sin*, or a clear sight and feeling sense of our sinfulness; without this, there is no repentance, no religion; for the gospel may be justly called, "the religion of a sinner;" none but sinners can need mercy, or repentance; and Jesus Christ expressly declares, "he came not to call the righteous," that is, such as the Pharisees, who *thought* themselves righteous, "but sinners to repentance." Now all men are sinners; not the most prophane and openly wicked only, but the most moral, religious, and blameless people among us; for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

The word repentance signifies a *change of mind*, or *after-thought*; a great change in the mind and disposition of a person, especially about himself, as a sinner. For this purpose the Holy Spirit opens his eyes to see the holy law of God, as contained in the Ten Commandments. This law requires of every person, love to God, and love to man. It requires us to love God supremely, and our neighbour as ourselves. It requires perfect, constant, unfinning obedience, all our lives long. It does not demand only sincere obedience, doing as well as we can, but doing all, and doing it always; so that if a man fail only in one point, he is thereby made a sinner; the law is broken; the curse follows; and if he be not pardoned through the blood of Christ, hell must be his portion.

In general, the repenting sinner is first alarmed on account of some great and open sin, if he has committed

ted such ; as, the woman of Samaria, when Christ charged her with adultery ; or as Paul was, when convinced of his murderous persecution of the saints. But conviction will not stop here ; it will trace the streams of sin to the spring, namely, that corrupt nature we brought into the world with us. We shall freely confess with David, that “ we were born in sin, and in iniquity did our mothers conceive us,” Psalm li. 3. We shall acknowledge with Paul, that “ in us, that is, in our flesh,” our corrupt nature, “ there is no good thing ;” but that “ every imagination of the thought of our hearts is only evil continually,” Gen. vi. 5. The penitent will readily own he has been a rebel against God all his life ; that he has indeed “ left undone those things which he ought to have done ; and done those things which he ought not to have done.”

The law of God is spiritual ; it reaches to the most secret thoughts, desires, wishes, and purposes of the mind. It forbids and condemns the sins of the heart, as well as those of the lip and the life. A convinced sinner is sensible of heart-sins, thousands and millions of them. He sees that his best duties and services are mingled with sin ; even his prayers, and all his religious exercises. He sees that he has, all his life, lived without God in the world, and paid no regard to his will and glory ; that he has loved himself, the world, and the creature, far more than God ; and that he has been doing all this contrary to light and knowledge ; notwithstanding the checks of his conscience and many resolutions to the contrary, and notwithstanding the mercies and the judgments which God had sent to reclaim him. Wherever there is this conviction, it will be accompanied with contrition.

II. *Contrition*, or a genuine sorrow for sin, and pain of heart on account of it. This is that “ soft heart,” or “ heart of flesh,” which God has promised to give his

his people; instead of that "heart of stone, with which we are born, and which has no spiritual feeling."

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Psal. li. 17. Men despise broken things. So the Pharisee despised the broken-hearted publican in the temple; but God did not despise him. So far from it, that he accounts the sorrow and shame of a penitent sinner more valuable than many costly sacrifices of rams and bullocks. A heart that trembles at the word of God; a heart breaking, not in despair, but in humiliation; a heart breaking with itself, and breaking away from sin. So Peter, when duly affected with the sin of denying his master, "went out and wept bitterly;" and Mary Magdalene, sensible of former iniquities, "washed her Saviour's feet with her tears."

There is indeed a *false sorrow*, which many mistake for the true. When a person is sick, and fears he shall die, it is not uncommon to hear him say he is sorry for sin; and if God will spare his life, he will amend his ways. But too often, such an one is only sorry that God is so holy, that the law is so strict, and that he is in danger of being damned for his sins. He is not grieved that he has offended God, his best friend and benefactor, who has followed him with goodness and mercy all his life. But the rottenness of this repentance often appears when the sick person recovers; when the fright is over, he returns to the same carnal course as before. The sorrow is no better than that of some criminals at the gallows; very sorry they are that they have forfeited their lives; but they are not affected with the criminality of their actions. Felix trembled, but did not repent; and Judas was sorry for what he had done, but not in a godly manner. And this shews how very uncertain, for the most part, is the repentance of a dying bed. God forbid we should delay our repentance to that season!

But

But the sorrow of a true penitent is for *sin*; as committed against a holy and good God. Such was the penitence of David, who says, Psalm li. 4, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." It is true, that he had sinned against his fellow-creatures; against Uriah, and Bathsheba, and Joab, and all Israel: doubtless, he lamented this; but what cut him to the heart was, his sin against God; that God who had raised him from the sheep-fold to the throne; who had saved him from the hand of Saul, and given him his master's house; and if that had been too little, would have given him more; (for thus Nathan the prophet aggravated his sin.) "Against thee, O Lord," said this broken-hearted penitent, "against thee have I sinned." Thus, "the goodness of God led him to repentance." Observe, likewise, the tone of the returning prodigal. "I will arise and go to my father, and say, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." He might have said, Sir, I have spent my fortune, hurt my health, become a beggar, and am ready to starve; be pleased to relieve me. No; his heart is affected with his sin and his folly. So it is with a repenting sinner. He considers the majesty of that holy being he has offended; the reasonableness of his commands, the obligations he has broken through, and especially the base ingratitude of his conduct. Then he will feel the force of those affecting words, Isa. i. 2, 3, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

The goodness of God to a sinner, in the way of providence, may well excite this godly sorrow; but, how much more, the consideration of redeeming love!

What ! did God "so love the world of rebel men as to send them is only begotten Son !" And did he send his Son, "not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." O love beyond degree, beyond example, beyond expression !

Let the penitent also remember Jesus ; the innocent, the amiable, the benevolent Jesus. Jesus, who left his throne of glory, and became a poor and afflicted man. Why was he despised and rejected of men ? Why a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ? Why had he not a place where to lay his blessed head ? Why did he endure the contradiction of sinners ? Why was he oppressed and afflicted ? Why was his visage so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men ? I know the reason, may the weeping penitent say, "Surely he hath borne my griefs and carried my sorrows ; he was wounded for my transgressions, and bruised for my iniquities."

" 'Twere you, my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormentors were ;
Each of my crimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear.

" 'Twere you that pull'd the veng'ance down
Upon his guiltless head ;
Break, break, my heart, O, burst mine eyes,
And let my sorrows bleed."

III. *Confession of sin* will also be made by the true penitent. By nature, we are rather disposed to conceal, deny, and excuse our sins ; to say, we are no worse than others ; that we could not help committing them ; and that we see no great harm in them. But it is not so where true repentance is found. We shall take the advice that Joshua gave to Achan. "My son, give glory to the Lord, and make confession to him." To
hide

hide or deny our sin, is to dishonour God; as if he did not see, or would not punish it; but to confess our sins, is to honour his holy law, which we have broken; to honour his omniscience, which beheld all our crimes; to honour his justice, which might take vengeance upon them; and to honour his patience, which has forbore to strike the fatal blow. And, indeed, a frank and free confession of our sins, is the best way of finding peace. "While I kept silence, says the Psalmist, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long; But I acknowledge my sin to thee, mine iniquity have I not hid; I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Psal. xxxii. 4, 5.

Secret sins require only secret confession to that God who seeth in secret; but sins that are public and scandalous ought to be more openly acknowledged; that we may undo, as far as we can, the evil committed.

The true penitent is *sincere* in his public confessions. How many call themselves "miserable sinners;" declare that "the remembrance of their sins is grievous, and the burden of them intolerable;" and cry, "Lord have mercy upon us; Christ have mercy upon us," without the least sense of the evil or burden of iniquity. This is abominable hypocrisy, and adding sin to sin. But the renewed soul is truly sincere in his confessions; he finds the words of scripture well adapted to his feelings, and can cordially adopt those of Job, "Behold I am vile; I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes;" or the words of the publican, "God be merciful to me, a sinner;" or the words of Paul, who calls himself "the chief of sinners."

We have now considered *Conviction*, *Contrition*, and *Confession*, as three essential ingredients in true repentance; and to these we must add one more.

IV. Con-

IV. *Conversion*; which is a forsaking sin, and turning from it to God. John the Baptist, that great preacher of repentance, exhorted his hearers to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance." And thus St. Paul preached both to Jews and Gentiles, "that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance," Acts xxvi. 20. Without this, the most humbling expressions and confessions, the greatest alarms of conscience, or floods of tears, will prove insufficient. "Though Cain's terror, Judas's confession, Pharoah's promises, Ahab's humiliation, Herod's hearing John gladly, and doing many things, were all combined in one man, they would not prove him a real penitent, while the love of one sin remained unmortified in the heart, or the practice of it *allowed* in his life." True repentance is not content to lop off the branches, but "lays the axe at the root of the tree." The devil may suggest that a beloved sin is but a little one, and may be spared; but grace will know, that as one small leak may sink a ship, so one indulged sin may damn a soul. However dear therefore a lust may be, or however hard to be parted with, it must be forsaken. So our Lord directs: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out; if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off;" that is, if thine eye or thine hand *cause thee to offend*, or incline thee to sin, turn away thine eye from it, as if thou hadst no eye to see it, or hand to practise it; and be as willing to part with a beloved lust, as a man who has a mortified hand or foot is willing to part with it, to preserve his life. "For it is better to enter into life thus maimed, than having two eyes or two hands to be cast into hell, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

You have a fine instance of true repentance in Zaccheus, the converted publican. When Christ and salvation came to his house and heart, he, who had probably been a great sinner, stands and says to the Lord;

"Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four fold." Here was not only confession of sin, but forsaking it. He, who had been an extortioner, becomes not only honest but liberal. He makes *restitution*; and so will every true penitent. He will undo what he has done if possible. Alas, how many evils is it now impossible to undo! Some poor souls are perhaps in hell, to whose destruction our wickedness contributed. But grace will enable us to do what is possible; sin shall not have dominion; and we shall now be as earnest to please and serve God, as once we were to serve the devil.

APPLICATION.

If this be repentance, the great point is, Have we repented? O, let us not deceive ourselves. Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness has said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;"—not come to nothing, or cease to be, (happy would it be for impenitent sinners were that their case) but they shall "be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Do not mistake. Repentance is universally necessary, for "all have sinned." If it could be proved, that we never committed but one single sin, repentance would be absolutely necessary. One theft, one murder, proved against a man at a human bar is enough to procure his condemnation; so one sin against God is enough to condemn us to eternal misery. But it is not one, it is not ten thousand sins only that we have to lament; "who can understand his errors?" Listen not to the father of lies; he promised Eve, that eating of the forbidden fruit should do her no harm; but she found, and we all find, the dreadful effects of that first sin.
Say

Say not, with the wicked man of old; "Who, when he heareth the words of this curse, shall bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart to add drunkenness to thirst." God forbid; for, mark the consequence,— "The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him," Deut. xxix. 19. Repent or perish is the solemn decision of God. "He commandeth all men, every where to repent;" and what can be more reasonable? The law which we have broken, is "holy, and just, and good." To love him was our most reasonable service; and would have been for our unspeakable benefit. Having then broken it, and by so doing incurred his wrath, and exposed ourselves to ruin, can it be thought unreasonable that we should make a humble submission, and implore his mercy?

Come then, and be encouraged to instant repentance. He might have cut you off in your sins, without a moment's warning; but he has given you time and space for repentance. His very command is encouragement. It implies, that "there is forgiveness with him;" for pardon of sin and repentance are inseparably connected. "Christ is exalted to give repentance and remission of sins." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Only do not suppose that repentance deserves or merits pardon. Salvation is all of grace; but this is the order appointed of God; for by penitential sorrow, the heart is prepared to receive the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let "the goodness of God lead thee to repentance." He delighteth not in the death of a sinner, but rather rejoiceth

rejoice
that
pentet
who
eth th
saying
then,
run to
shall
return

Th
Let n
let hi
will d
then,
"Th
ware
you r
the pa
you p
you r
Holy
can t
trem
fibili
pent
said,
comm
tears
the
Plea
all e
and
para

L
than

rejoiceth in his return. And our Saviour assures us, that "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance." Arise, sinner, for he calleth thee. Does your heart begin to relent? Are you saying, "I will arise and go to my father?" Arise, then, and go at once. He will see thee afar off, and run to meet thee; he waits to be gracious, and there shall be joy in heaven, and joy on earth, upon thy return.

Thousands as vile and base as you have found mercy. Let not Satan say it is too late; the door is open: nor let him say it is too soon. He may say, to-morrow will do. God says, to-day, "While it is called to-day;" then, hear his voice. To-morrow may be too late. "This night may thy soul be required of thee." Beware of deferring repentance to a dying bed. Will you not then have enough to do, to bear with patience the pains and agonies of dissolving nature? Why should you plant thorns in your dying pillow? Why should you not then have the peace of God and the joy of the Holy Ghost, to support and comfort your heart? Who can tell but sudden death may be your lot; if not, extreme pain, or a disordered head, may prevent the possibility of repentance. And do not imagine that repentance has any thing in it forbidding. Christ has said, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." The penitent has more pleasure in his tears, than the worldling in all his gaiety. Besides, if the door be strait, it opens into boundless pleasures. Pleasures not confined to time, but which will last to all eternity. God now dwells in the contrite heart; and soon shall every true penitent dwell with him in paradise.

Let those, who know what true repentance is, give thanks to him who has graciously bestowed it. Know,
my

my friends, that repentance is not the work of a day, but of life. The more you know of your own heart, and the more you know of Christ, the more need will you feel of a repenting spirit. "Walk humbly with thy God;" and let the remembrance of forgiven sins keep you low in your own eyes; having received mercy, love much, for much is forgiven; and labour daily to maintain a conscience void of offence toward God and toward all men.

"O, how I hate those lusts of mine,
That crucify'd my God;
Those sins that pierc'd and nail'd his flesh
Fast to the fatal wood!

"Whilst with a melting broken heart
My murder'd Lord I view,
I'll raise revenge against my sins,
And slay the murd'ers too."

5 DE60

Now

N

any

are

"T

of th

mind

peop

do h

work

trary

unde

sue,

heav

of th

to w

all.

v. 8

the

ber

of h

St

The Work of the Holy Spirit.



S E R M O N,

ON

ROMANS, viii, 9:

Now if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

NOTWITHSTANDING the various distinctions which subsist among men, there are but two of any real consequence in the sight of God; and these are mentioned by St. Paul just before our text—"They that are after the flesh, and mind the things of the flesh; and they that are after the Spirit, and who mind the things of the Spirit," ver. 5.; that is, those people, who, remaining in the state they were born, do habitually consult and relish, pursue and delight in worldly, sensual, and sinful things; or, on the contrary, those who being born again of the Spirit, are under his guidance and influence; and therefore pursue, regard, and love things that are of a spiritual and heavenly nature. Every person here belongs to one of these classes; and it behoves us seriously to examine to which of them; for on this depends our eternal all. He who is after the flesh "cannot please God," v. 8.; but is in a state of death, v. 6.; or, as it is in the text, "is none of Christ's," that is, not a member of his body, not a child in his family, not a subject of his kingdom; and dying in this state, Christ will

SERM. IX. I not

not own him for his, nor adjudge him to eternal life at the great day. But if, by the grace of God, we have the Holy Spirit, and live under his gracious influences, it is a proof that we belong to Christ, and shall obtain eternal glory with him. How necessary is it then that we should be able to decide with certainty on this great question, and to know whether we belong to Christ or not. That we may be able to do this, let us pray to God to assist us while we,

I. Consider who the Spirit of Christ is.

II. Prove that all real Christians have the Spirit of Christ, and shew for what purposes; and,

III. Point out the evidence of our state arising from thence.

1. Let us consider who the Spirit of Christ is.

The whole scripture declares that "there is but one only living and true God;" but the scripture clearly shews, that in the unity of the Godhead there are three (whom we call persons): thus, in 1 John, v. 7, "There are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." They are generally called by the names, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; which names are not intended to describe their manner of subsistence among themselves (for that is a branch of knowledge above our capacity, and is not revealed); but the manner of their operations in the covenant of grace. To each of these divine persons particular attributes and works are ascribed, and each of them is expressly called God. The divine person we now speak of is the Holy Spirit; called in the same verse with our text, "the Spirit of God." That he is properly called a *Person* appears from the personal properties and works ascribed to him. He is

said

said to have *Understanding* or *Wisdom*, 1 Cor. ii. 10. Isa. ii. 3. He is said to have a *Will*, 1 Cor. xii. 11. He is possessed of *Power*, Job xxxii. 4. He is said to *teach us*, John xiv. 26. 1 Joh. ii. 27. to *lead*—to *guide*—to *convince*—to *renew*—to *speak*—to *shew*—to *call*—and *send* ministers. This plainly proves that he is a person, and not merely a quality or property of Deity, as some have vainly pretended.

It is equally evident that he is a *Divine Person*, or truly and properly God, equal with the Father and the Son; for divine perfections are ascribed to him, as *Eternity*—*Omnipresence*—or being every where; and *Omniscience*, or knowing all things. The Holy Spirit is expressly called *God*. Ananias is said to lie to the Holy Ghost, Acts v. 3; and in the next verse, St. Peter says to him, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." The same person is intended in both verses, which plainly shews that the Holy Ghost is God. This also appears from the *sin* against the Holy Ghost; if he were not God, would blaspheming him be a sin, an unpardonable sin? But above all, consider the form of baptism. Our Lord commands his apostles to "disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." So likewise in the usual form of benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you." In both these cases, the very same honours are ascribed to the Spirit as are given to the other divine persons; which would be blasphemy, if he were not a divine person, or truly and properly God.

He is called in our text the *Spirit of Christ*, not only because he *proceeded* from Christ, as well as from the Father, but because he was *promised* by Christ, and *sent* by Christ. He was the Spirit of Christ in all

the ancient prophets; and he now "testifies of Christ," "takes the things of Christ, and shews them unto us;" in a word, because the whole salvation of Christ is applied to the heart by his sacred influences. We are now, in the second place, to

II. Prove that all real Christians have the Spirit of Christ, and to shew for what purposes they have him. So necessary is this to salvation, that St. Paul declares in our text, that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" that is, he is no Christian.

It is one of the most dangerous errors of this day, to maintain that the influences of the Spirit are not now to be expected, and that they were confined to the days of the apostles, when they had power to work miracles. In consequence of this wicked notion, all that is said of Conversion, Regeneration, and Consolation, is out of date; and poor ignorant souls are lulled asleep in carnal security, contentedly resting in the form of godliness without the power; while they are taught by their blind leaders, to call all true, vital, and felt religion, nonsense and enthusiasm.

That any of the clergy of the Church of England should thus deny the work of the Spirit, is extremely absurd and inconsistent, because that church strongly maintains the necessity of it in many parts of the Common Prayer Book. In the collects you may recollect these petitions: "Grant unto us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good." In another place, "Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity." In the Communion service she prays, "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit." Observe also the prayer for the King; "Replenish him with the grace of thy Holy Spirit;" and for the Royal Family,

"Endue

“Endue them with thy Holy Spirit.” In the XIIIth Article of the Church, it is affirmed, that “Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, are not pleasant to God.” Every clergyman, at his ordination, is asked by the Bishop this question: “Do you trust that you are moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office?” To which the minister replies, “I trust so.” And in the Collect for Whit-Sunday, the Church thus prays—God, who, as at this time, didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit; *Grant us, by the same Spirit, to have a right judgment in all things; and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort.*” Also in the Collect for the Sunday after Ascension-day, “We beseech thee, leave us not comfortless; but *send to us thy Holy Ghost to comfort us.*” You see, then, my brethren, that the Church of England strongly maintains the continuance of the work of the Spirit as necessary to all true ministers and christians. How then do any affirm, that his influences have ceased 1600 years? But as our faith must not rest on the authority of men, let us search the scriptures to prove that the work of the Spirit on the heart is absolutely necessary to true godliness.

We freely grant, indeed, that the *extraordinary gifts* of the Holy Ghost were confined to the first ages. Who now pretends to the gift of tongues, or power of working miracles? We do not plead for infallibility, or knowledge of future events, or ability to know any thing not revealed in the Bible. It is for the *sanctifying influences* of the Spirit we plead. The apostles and first christians received from the Spirit not only the miraculous powers just mentioned, but light in their understandings, conviction of sin in their consciences, and faith and love to Christ in their hearts. They “purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit:” they “abounded in hope
I 3 by

by the Holy Ghost;" they had "joy in the Holy Ghost:" "the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost." Through the same Spirit they "mortified the deeds of the body;" and cried, "Abba, Father." The Spirit was "the earnest of their heavenly inheritance;" and all their holy tempers, affections, and actions, are called "fruits of the Spirit." Are not all these things as necessary to us as they were to them? Corrupt nature is just the same now as then, and needs the same power to change it. Grace is also just the same now as it was then, and is derived from the same source. This alone is enough to prove the necessity of the Spirit's work.

Observe also, that our blessed Lord promised that his Spirit should *abide* and *continue* with the church, instead of his bodily presence. So he speaks, John xiv. 18, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may *abide with you for ever*." Observe, he was promised to abide with the church *for ever*; not with the apostles only, for he was to be "given to all who should believe;" and that, not for two or three hundred years, but for ever; all the time of Christ's absence from earth, until he shall come the second time to judgment. But this will more fully appear by considering the *purposes* for which the Spirit is given.

All men are by nature "dead in trespasses and sins;" dead to God and spiritual things; as a corpse in the grave is dead to the affairs of this world. Now "it is the Spirit that quickeneth," John vi. 63. The word of Christ in the gospel is employed for this end. "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God;" but it is by the Spirit's power that the dead soul is quickened to hear it. The word is brought home to the heart, and is then heard, "not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God." O,
that

that the word may now be heard among us in this manner! "There is but one word in scripture for the air which the body breathes, and for that grace which is the breath of our spiritual life; and therefore, when our blessed Lord breathed upon the apostles, he at the same time explained the meaning of what he did by saying, "*Receive ye the Holy Ghost*"; and hence it is called *inspiration*, or breathing in; for it is the gracious office of the Holy Ghost to act upon the soul, as breath does on the body.

The Spirit of God is called "the Spirit of truth." No man knows the truth, in a saving manner, but by his teaching. A scholar may know the letter of it, but no human learning can give its true meaning. St. Paul affirms, 1 Cor. ii. 14, "The natural man (that is, the rational man) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned:" and he says, verse 12, "We have received the Spirit of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God;"--that is, we have been taught and enlightened by him, that we might have a true and saving knowledge of the great and glorious blessings of the gospel; and, indeed, no other teaching is sufficient for the purpose. It is well said in one of the Homilies, "Man's human and worldly wisdom and science is not needful to the understanding of scripture, but the revelation of the Holy Ghost, who inspireth the true meaning unto them that with humility and diligence search therefore." This is great comfort for poor people, who are apt to say, they are no scholars, and therefore cannot understand the bible. Pray, my friends, for the Holy Spirit, and you will then understand it better than the most learned man who has not the Spirit.

Again,

Again, the Spirit is given to every real christian to "reprove, or *convince of sin*." We are by nature ignorant of God's holy law, and therefore of sin, which is the transgression of the law. We are "alive without the law," as St. Paul once was; but when the commandment comes home to the conscience by the power of the blessed Spirit, then we are deeply sensible of our lost and ruined condition; of the sins of our life; sins of omission as well as of commission; of the sins of our heart; and of the sin of our nature; but the Holy Spirit convinces us especially of the great sin of unbelief, in rejecting Christ, and neglecting his precious salvation.

Again, it is by the power of the Spirit, that we are enabled to believe to the saving of the soul. If we see the *need* of salvation, it is by his grace. If we see the *way* of salvation, it is by his teaching. If we are made willing to be saved in that way, it is by his power. Faith is the gift of God. We believe by the operation of the Spirit. And indeed it is a great thing to believe. To receive cordially the whole testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ. In the view of our sin and misery, as children of wrath, to believe that Christ *can* and *will* save us. With a heavy burden of guilt on the conscience, to cast that burden on the Lord, and so find rest to our souls. To renounce our own works, and merits, and trust alone to the righteousness of Christ. This is a great work; a work that none can perform but by the "Spirit of faith."

The Spirit of Christ is also called "the Spirit of holiness;" for he is the author of that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Believers are "chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." Regeneration is the beginning of a new and spiritual life. Sanctification is a work of the Spirit in preserving and increasing

ing that life. All true christians are *saints*, as you may see in several of the Epistles, which were written to the saints: and though through the folly and wickedness of many, that name is become a term of reproach, let all men know, that if we are not saints we cannot be saved.

Another purpose for which believers have the Spirit, is to assist them in all religious duties. "Without me, said Christ, ye can do nothing:" and St. Paul says, "We are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;" that is, we have it by actual supplies of the Holy Ghost. Christ is present, by his Spirit, "where ever two or three are gathered together in his name;" and if they get a blessing under the word preached, or in singing psalms or hymns, or in prayer, it is entirely from the influence of the Holy Ghost. He is said, Rom. viii. 28, to "help our infirmities in prayer;" and we read also of "praying in the Spirit, and of singing in the Spirit."

The Holy Ghost is also given to believers as a *Comforter*. Under this pleasing name, Jesus Christ promised to send him to his sorrowful disciples, and said he should always abide in the Church as a Comforter. Blessed be God, there is comfort in religion. The ways of God are pleasantness and peace, and none will deny it but those who never tried them. True happiness is found only in the way of faith, love, and obedience. The knowledge of sin forgiven; peace of conscience through the blood of Christ; a good hope through grace; victory over the fear of death:—are not these comfortable and blessed things? What can the world, or sin, propose of equal value? Well, all these are from the gracious and powerful influences of the Spirit; and this leads us to the last thing proposed.

III. The

10 . THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

III, The evidence of our state, as it arises from having or not having the Spirit. Our text says, that "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his," consequently is in a dreadful condition; and dying so, must perish for ever without remedy. But the words imply a glorious truth, namely, that some persons do belong to Christ. Yes, they are his dear people, by the gift of the Father, by the purchase of his blood, and by the power of his Spirit, whereby they gave themselves up to him.

Having the Spirit, in the manner and for the purposes we have heard, is the grand proof of being in a state of salvation. This is called the *Seed*, 2 Cor. i. 21; Eph. i. 13, iv. 30. Valuable things are sealed, for the security of them, and to denote whose property they are. Thus are believers sealed. God has given them his Spirit, he dwells in their souls; he quickens them; he enlightens them; he convinces them of sin; he enables them to believe in Christ; he sanctifies them; he helps them to pray; he comforts their hearts. This is God's seal. It cannot be counterfeited. — There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," and who prove they are in him by "walking after the Spirit. To be spiritually minded is life and peace. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Whoever has the Spirit has the sure *earnest* of heaven, 2 Cor. i. 22, Ephes. i. 14; he becomes "a joint heir with Jesus Christ; he has the *first fruits* of the Spirit;" and both soul and body shall certainly be made happy for ever in the eternal world.

APPLICA-

APPLICATION.

And now, dear immortals, what do you think of these things? Seeing that having the Spirit of God determines our state, how is it with you? Have you the Spirit? It may be known. It ought to be known; for our all depends upon it. Heaven is ours if we have the Spirit. Hell will be ours if we die without him. Recollect a moment what has been said, and pray with David, "Search me, O Lord, and try my heart." You have heard for what purposes every believer receives the Spirit. He quickens the dead soul. Has he quickened you? Are you alive to God, or are you alive to sin and the world? He enlightens the mind and the truth. Do you know, distinguish, and love the truth of the gospel, or do you despise and hate it? He convinces of sin. Are you convinced and humbled for your iniquity? or do you make light of it—perhaps boast of it? He is the author of faith. Do you believe in Jesus, or do you neglect his salvation? He sanctifies the soul. Is your soul sanctified by his grace, or are you wallowing in the filth of sin? He helps the true christian to pray. Do you know any thing of his gracious help in prayer, or do you live without prayer, or, which is nearly as bad, content yourself with a lifeless form of bare words without the heart? The Spirit of God is a Comforter. Is your comfort or pleasure derived from him, or from the vanities and vices of the world? May the Lord enable you to give a serious and honest answer to these enquiries! If, as it may be feared, some of you are without the Spirit, what is your case? You belong not to Christ; you are none of his. Tremble at the dreadful thought. Die you must; and you must come to judgment too. When you see him on the awful throne, O how you will wish to belong to him, and

to be owned by him. O then, be persuaded this moment, to lift up your heart to God, and say, Merciful God, give me thy Holy Spirit! He has promised to give him to those who ask. This blessed gift may yet be yours, and shall, if you sincerely desire it. "Ask then, and you shall receive; seek and you shall find; knock and the door shall be opened." God Almighty, in compassion to your souls, enable you to do this.

And as to those who have obtained this greatest of blessings, who have the Holy Spirit, what more can be said to you? Survey the wondrous gift with grateful acknowledgment. What has God wrought! Deny not, from false humility, the heavenly benefit. Have you experienced those sacred effects of the Spirit, which have been so frequently mentioned? Here then is the broad seal of the Majesty of heaven, securing your relation to Christ, and your title to mansions of glory. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; and having received the Spirit, take care to "walk in the Spirit;" be careful not to "grieve the Spirit;" and be concerned to bring forth "the fruits of the Spirit," which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.—Amen.

5 DE 60

HOLINESS.



SERMON,

ON
HEBREWS, xii. 14.

Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

HOLY, Holy, Hbly, is the Lord God Almighty !" This is the language of saints and angels in their solemn worship. Yes: The God who made us ; the God who rules us ; the God who will judge us, is most holy. " Who is like unto him glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders ? " The due consideration of God's holiness will make us serious at all times, and especially when we consider our own unholiness. Well may each of us adopt the words of the prophet Isaiah, " Woe is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips ; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. " — " Who can stand before this holy Lord God ? "

When God created man, he made him holy. God created man in his own image, which image was holiness ; for this is the peculiar character of God. But man soon lost the glory of his nature by sin. He became an unholy being ; and God, " who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and who cannot look upon iniquity, " banished him from paradise ; for sin broke

off the happy intimacy that before subsisted. As there can be no communion between light and darkness, so there can be no communion between a holy God and an unholy sinner. And this is the reason of what is affirmed in our text, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." To "see the Lord," is a description of the happiness of heaven, where all his divine perfections will be displayed to the admiration and delight of all the redeemed; but we cannot see him without holiness. Now God, who made man holy at first, has graciously contrived to make him holy again. This is a chief part of his great salvation; for, by the blood of Christ, the guilt of sin is taken away from believers; and, by the Spirit of Christ, they are born again, and made new creatures; that is, they are made holy; and so made meet for heaven, which is seeing God. "The pure in heart shall see God."

Our business at this time is,

I. To shew what holiness is.

II. To prove the necessity of holiness; and,

III. To point out the means of holiness.

I. Let us consider the nature of true holiness.—Briefly, Holiness is the image of God restored in the soul; or, in other words, "Holiness is that purity of a man in his nature, inclinations, and actions, which is an imitation and expression of the divine image."

Observe here, holiness is *purity*; the contrary of that horrid defilement sin has produced in the soul of man. There are two things in sin, the *guilt* of it, and the *defilement* of it. By the guilt of it, we are liable to eternal punishment; by the defilement of it, we are made unfit to serve or enjoy God. Guilt makes us afraid. Defilement makes us ashamed. Thus Adam had both guilt and fear upon his first sin. Now, in

the

the salvation of Jesus Christ, God has provided for taking both these away from us. The guilt of sin is wholly removed from those who believe by the blood of Christ, which made atonement for it. The filth of sin is removed, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, in all those who are born again.

The purity we speak of is the purity of the heart, or nature. It is not enough that the outward actions are not impure; there can be no true holiness till the heart is purified. Now many people overlook this entirely. They think it enough if they are *good liver*s; as they call it, or do good works. This was the fatal mistake of the Pharisees, so severely exposed by our blessed Lord. They were very particular about meats and drinks, and washing every thing, to prevent defilement; but he charges them with washing the outside only, and taking no care of the heart; they drew nigh to God with the mouth, but their heart was far from him. Their inward part was very wickedness; they were like white-washed tombs, beautiful without, but full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Our Lord therefore insisted upon the necessity of being born again; or being partaker of a new and divine nature. Believers are "born from above," "born of God;" and as every child partakes of the same nature with his father, so do the new born sons of God; they "put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; they are renewed in the spirit of their minds, and put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. iv. 22-24.

The heart being thus renewed, there must of course be new dispositions and inclinations. Every nature has its proper desires and inclinations. Those of the Christian are holy, in conformity to the will of God.

The alteration that grace makes is strikingly represented by the prophet Isaiah, in the 11th chapter:—“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the cow, and the bear shall lie down, and feed together;”—that is, wicked men, however fierce, shall be so altered by the efficacy of the gospel and grace of Christ, that they shall become meek, and gentle, and loving, even to the weakest christians. Brethren, have you experienced any change of this sort? And what must we think of persecutors, who despise religion; who hate and hurt serious people? Surely these are still lions and wolves, and cannot be esteemed the sheep of Christ. O that such may know what it is to be born again!

Let us now consider briefly, what are the prevailing dispositions and inclinations of holy persons.

They are under the habitual influence of the *fear of God*—not the fear of a slave, but the fear of a child. God has put his fear into their hearts; so that, instead of living without him, and contrary to him, as once they did, they are in the fear of God all the day long. They know that his eye is upon them; they set him always before them, and their desire is, to please and glorify him in all they think, and speak, and do.

Again, They are *bumble*. Humility is the root of all other graces, and the only soil in which they will grow. They know themselves; they know the plague of their own hearts; they are conscious of innumerable sins to which the world are strangers. The remembrance of sins committed in their carnal state, covers them with shame; and the sense of much remaining corruption keeps them low in their own eyes; so that they not only lie in the dust before God, but they are kept from despising their neighbour. If they

they differ from the worst of mankind, they remember that grace alone made them to differ. Thus, being converted, they receive the kingdom of heaven as little children, and learn to live constantly dependent on the wisdom, grace, and power of their heavenly Father.

Once more, Holy persons are *spiritual* and *heavenly-minded*: for, "to be carnally minded, is death; but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace." Faith has led them to regard future and eternal things, far above the vanities of time: for, that faith, by which they now live, is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Their minds are disposed to prefer spiritual to carnal things. When engaged in spiritual duties they are in their element; and, at times, can look down with becoming indifference on all the trifles of time. Their "conversation is in heaven." By the cross of Christ "the world is crucified to them;" that is, they are no more delighted with the world, than a good man would be with the rotten carcass of a malefactor; and they likewise are "crucified to the world;" the world can act upon them with no greater efficacy than the objects of sense can upon a dead person.

But, above all, *Love* is the grand prevailing disposition of holy persons. Without love, all attainments and professions are vain. God says, "My son, give me thine heart;" and the believer replies—

"Take my poor heart, and let it be

"For ever closed to all but thee."

God appears infinitely lovely to all true believers. His love in Christ Jesus is strongly attractive. They love him because he first loved them. Having a good hope through grace that God for Christ's sake has pardoned their sins, accepted their persons, and that he

will bring them to glory, they feel themselves constrained to depart from iniquity, which they know he hates, and to practise holiness, which they know he loves. Hence his people, his word, his day, his cause, become their delight; and, to glorify him, is the new end of their being. This leads us further to observe, that the *actions* of such persons must needs be holy also. Their nature being renewed, and their dispositions sanctified.

They become holy in all manner of conversation and godliness. It would be infamous hypocrisy in a man to profess that his heart is holy, if his life is immoral. Morality there may be without holiness; but there can be no holiness without morality. The law of God being written on the heart, and the love of God shed abroad in it, obedience will become easy and pleasant. Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden is light. But here is a large field which we can but just enter upon.

Good works, properly so called, must be done from *a right principle*; that is, the new nature, or grace of the Spirit in a believer: they must be done according to *a right rule*, which is the word of God; and they must be done to *a right end*; and that is, to glorify God. O how few works are truly good, if tried by these rules!

Holiness comprehends all the duties we owe to God; these must be regarded in the *first place*: whereas many people leave them entirely out of their account. What is more common than to hear ignorant persons comfort themselves against the fears of death, by their having been honest, and having paid every one his own. To such people we may put the question that a minister once put to such a person on a dying bed—"But have you paid God what you owed him?" Alas, we owe God our hearts, our love, our obedience; but how many

many have forgot God ; lived without God ; and rebelled against God, all their lives. But a holy man has a steady regard to the word, will, and glory of God, in all his ways.

Nor will our neighbour be forgotten. Religion does not consist entirely in praying and worshipping God ; the holy man brings religion into all his concerns ; according to that ancient promise, Zech. xiv. 20, " In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, *Holiness unto the Lord* ;" that is, Holiness shall not be confined to priests and temples, it shall be brought into common life, and all the concerns of it be managed to the glory of God. It is a great truth, that " to be really holy is to be *relatively* holy. Holiness will make good husbands and wives ; good parents and children ; good masters and mistresses ; good tradesmen ; good servants ; and good subjects. It *will* do this. It actually does it, to the astonishment of all who observe it ; and this is the best way that people can take to promote the gospel, and make their neighbours like it. Thus must every believer become a practical preacher, " holding forth the word of life." Our " light must shine before men," and then " they, seeing our good works, will glorify our Father which is in heaven." This is a short account of real holiness : let us now proceed,

II. To prove the *necessity of holiness* : our text declares, that " without it, no man shall see the Lord." The whole Scripture testifies to the same truth. And surely it must be evident, in a moment, to every considerate person, for it is a part of our salvation ; and to talk of being saved without holiness, is as absurd as to speak of being saved without salvation. Jesus Christ came to save us *from our sins*, not to save us *in* them. To be saved from the guilt of sin, or to be pardoned, is but half our salvation ; Jesus Christ equally designed by his death to " redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify

purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Christ therefore cannot, will not be divided; we must have the whole of his salvation, or none of it. Let none therefore dream of salvation while the love and practice of sin is voluntarily continued.

Besides, *the command of God* shews the necessity of holiness. What is the language of the law? "I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy;" and it is the language of the holy gospel too. To shew the eternal force and propriety of this reason, it is transferred to the New Testament, where St. Peter saith, "As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." The same "gospel that brings salvation, teaches us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts; and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

Again, *The electing love of God* proves the necessity of holiness. Did God choose from all eternity those whom he will finally glorify? Yes; but for what purpose? "That they should be holy," 1st Th. i. 4. Did he predestinate them to eternal life? Yes, and for this end, "that they should be conformed to the image of his Son," Rom. viii. 29. And accordingly, such persons are exhorted by St. Paul, Col. iii. 12, to "put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness," &c. These things become them, and are required of them, on account of their interest in the electing love of God.

Above all, *the nature of God*, who is himself infinite holiness, and *the nature of heaven*, which consists in the sight, service, and enjoyment of God, make it absolutely necessary that we should be holy; for "without this," as our text affirms, "no man shall see the Lord." No man; be he who he may. Whether high

or

or low ; rich or poor ; learned or ignorant ; esteemed or disesteemed of men. *No man* ; whatever his knowledge or religion may be, or however high his profession ; whether he boast of his virtue, or his creed, of his works, or his prayers—all, all is in vain without holiness. Let no man then deceive himself with vain words, the God of heaven has decreed that the unholy man shall not enter into his kingdom.

Indeed, it is most certain that heaven itself would be a hell to the wicked. The natural man well knows and must confess, he has no relish for any thing heavenly. His pleasures are sensual and worldly. His delight is in folly, and vanity, and sin. The wicked of the earth are his chosen companions. He hates and persecutes the godly ; despises them because they are saints ; perhaps disturbs their worship, and injures their persons. Prayer and praise, reading and hearing the word of God, are dull and melancholy things. The sabbath itself is a burden. How then can an unholy soul go to heaven ? It is impossible in the nature of things, and doubly impossible by the decree of God. Much more might be said to shew the necessity of holiness ; but surely enough has been said to satisfy every reasonable person. May we not hope that some are now saying, Yes, it is plain enough. God has said it, and I believe it. I believe it for myself, and I am now ready to enquire, How may I, who am an unholy creature by nature and by practice, become holy ? We shall gladly answer so necessary an inquiry, for this is the last thing proposed, namely,

III. *The means whereby we may become holy.*

And here it is necessary to observe, that no person in a natural state can arrive at true holiness by his own power

power or exortions. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" nothing more, nothing better, nor ever will be. Till we are born again; till we believe in Christ; till we are united to him, we can never be holy in the least degree. The shadow and resemblance of holiness there may be, in morality and virtue; but all the true holiness that ever was in the world, or ever will be in it, is as much from Christ as all the light we have is from the sun. In vain therefore do poor ignorant souls labour for very vanity in fasting, praying, penances, &c. &c. while they forget Christ. Equally wrong is their notion who think they must be indebted to Christ for pardon, but to their own good endeavours for holiness; the language of the true Christian is, "Surely in the Lord Jesus have I righteousness and strength."

Know therefore, my friends, that as the sin of our nature was derived to us from Adam, the first man, so all the holiness of our new nature must be derived to us from Jesus Christ, the second Adam; that "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we may also bear the image of the heavenly." Now, blessed be God, there is a fullness of grace in Christ for his whole church; of which church are we, if enabled by faith to receive Christ, and out of his fullness receive grace for grace.

Faith is that grace which God has appointed as the means of our becoming holy. People have a very wrong notion of faith, who think it an enemy of holiness, or good works. If we look into the Scripture we shall find, that the hearts of the vilest heathens were "purified by faith in Christ," Acts xv. 9; and sanctified by faith," Acts xxvi. 18. The faith that brings the convinced sinner to Christ for salvation, receives from him, as it were, pardon with one hand, and holiness with the other; both being equally the design of Christ

Christ in his mediatorial work, and equally the desire of every new-born soul.

Observe, likewise, that *the comforts of the gospel*, such as assurance of God's love and the pardon of our sins; peace of conscience; joy in the Holy Ghost; and the hope of glory, have a wonderful tendency to promote our holiness.

For the same purpose we must diligently *read our Bibles*; frequently *hear the preached gospel*, and especially abound in *prayer*. These are properly called *Means of grace*, and though they have no power in themselves to make us holy, yet are they appointed of God for our use; he has graciously promised to bless them; and, in the diligent use of them, every grace of the Spirit is exercised, and by exercise increased. Thus a sense of the evil of sin, and of the beauty of holiness is kept up; and thus especially, are our souls led out of themselves, in direct acts of faith, to Jesus, and so enabled to receive daily supplies of grace for our growth in holiness, even "grace for grace."

APPLICATION.

And is this holiness? O, my friends, where is it to be found? O how little is it to be seen in our world! Yet this is indeed that image of God in which every true Christian is renewed, and without which a person is yet in his sins, and dying so, must perish for ever.

And does not this alarm the careless sinner, who daily indulges the love and practice of sin? Say, dying fellow-creature, is not thy heart as far from this holiness as the east is from west? You know it is. And what must be the consequence? Dost thou not believe the God of truth, that this unholiness must shut you out of heaven? Has it not been clearly proved that such

as

as you cannot be admitted there? Your own heart allows that it is impossible.

But surely you are not willing matters should remain thus. Does a desire arise in your heart, O that I were holy? Well, blessed be God for such a desire. Know, my friends, that all are alike by nature. If any here are made holy, sovereign grace made them so. Do you begin to cry, What must I do? We answer, first look to Christ for the pardon of your sins; and then, for the purity of your heart. You must not first strive to make yourselves better, and then think you may come to him with better hope of salvation; but come *now*, come *just as you are*, and the friend of sinners will receive you.

The same direction may be useful to those who are seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness; who mourn over remaining corruption, and long for the image of God. Look to Jesus for it. Remember that by virtue of union to Christ, you may, by faith, derive daily grace from him, through the power of the Holy Spirit. "Without him you can do nothing;" but "his grace is sufficient" for all things. In the exercise of constant faith, and in the diligent use of all appointed means, expect the supplies of the Spirit; believing, assuredly, that he who has begun the good work in you will carry it on, till made meet for the heavenly inheritance.

5 DE 60

Death and Judgment.



S E R M O N,

ON

HEBREWS, ix. 27.

It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment.

IT is recorded of Philip, King of Macedon, that he ordered one of his pages to come every morning to his chamber door, and cry aloud—"Philip, remember thou art mortal!" How much the conduct of this heathen prince flames numbers of people called Christians! who, instead of keeping their mortality in mind, do all in their power to forget it. This discourse is intended to call your serious attention to what so much concerns you. Like Moses therefore we say, "O that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider your latter end!" May you be led to pray, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

Our first business at this time is with DEATH. There is something solemn in the very name! but, O, who can tell what death is? None of our relations or neighbours return from the grave to inform us; we

SERM. XI.

L

must

must learn its nature, its cause, and its consequences from the faithful word of God. We may indeed see something of it in our dying friends. We may see the hasty progress of some fatal disease. The pains, the groans, the agonies of the dying, we have observed. We have seen many a man cut down in the midst of life: hearty, strong, and chearful, one week; the next, a pale, cold, lifeless corpse, lying in his coffin, and carried to the churchyard. Others we have seen or heard of, cut off without a moment's warning; perfectly well one moment, the next in eternity. How true is the Scripture. "All flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field; in the morning it flourisheth, in the evening it is cut down and withered." How frail is man! At "his best estate he is altogether vanity." He is crushed sooner than the moth.

What awful *separations* does death make! It removes us at once from our nearest relations and dearest friends. We shut our eyes to all the world; "we shall see man no more in the land of the living." Death puts a sudden period to all our projects, good or bad; "in that very day our thoughts perish." It deprives the great of all their pomp and power; and the rich of all their possessions, for man "bringeth nothing with him into this world, and it is certain he can carry nothing out."

Death is *universal*. Other evils are partial. But all men die; "for what man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?" Death has reigned in all ages; and though in early times, some men lived many hundred years, yet they all died at last. Death reigns in all countries: as certainly as the tide ebbs and flows, so "one generation passeth away, and another cometh." This is "the way of all flesh." "The grave is the house appointed for all living." "There is no discharge in this war." "We must needs die."

Death

Death is in *itself* awful! The fear of death; the agonies of death; the ghastly appearance of the dead; the sad change that takes place in the body, which renders it offensive, and obliges us to bury it out of our sight; the coffin, the shroud, the cold grave, the crawling worms, the sordid dust—all these are terrible things to nature. But what makes death a thousand times more terrible is, that it is *the effect of God's anger*. Had there been no sin, there had been no death. God, to keep Adam from sin, threatened him with death; but Satan, the father of lies, said he should not die. He ventured on the forbidden fruit, and, so by his sin, "death came into the world and hath passed upon all" his children in every succeeding age. Death, then, is "the wages of sin;" and carries with it the most awful marks of God's anger. This is justly called by St. Paul the *sting* of death: "the sting of death is sin." It is the consciousness of guilt, and the just dread of future misery, which makes death so very dreadful. Poor thoughtless mortals, neglecting to regard the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, which brings a sovereign remedy, an antidote to death, are unwilling to think of it: they put off as much as possible the evil day: but did they know the love of Christ in dying to disarm death of its sting; did they consider, that, by faith in Jesus, all the danger of death may be avoided, they would sit down and look death in the face; and wisely consider, how they may meet, with safety and pleasure, what they can never avoid.

For let it be remembered, that the death of each of us, here present, is absolutely certain. Our text says, "*it is appointed*:" it is the firm decree of God, which cannot be reversed. It is the unalterable law of God, a law which no sinner can transgress; other laws of God are trampled under feet, but this *must* be obeyed. We know not *when*, nor *how* we shall die: but we are sure

that we *must* die. Whether we are high or low ; rich or poor ; male or female ; young or old ; “ it is appointed for us once to die.” Possibly, when death comes, we may be very unfit to die ; very unwilling to die ; but death will not delay on that account : ready or unready, when the hour comes we must submit. It is said of the wicked—“ he is *driven away* in his wickedness”—*suddenly* perhaps ; at least *unexpectedly*. It was “ when the rich fool” talked of many years to come, that God said to him, “ this night shall thy soul be required of thee ;” often *violently* dragged to the grave like a malefactor to the gallows. O what would some great and rich sinners have given for a few weeks, or a few hours of life, if money could have bought them : but death will not be bribed : go the sinner must, “ although the physicians help, friends groan, the wife and children weep, and the man himself use his utmost endeavours to retain the spirit ; his soul is required of him ; yield he must, and go, where he shall never more see the light.”

Here let us stop a moment ; and apply to ourselves what has already been said.

Is life so short ? Then why should we waste it ? Why should we make it shorter by our sin and folly ? How much of our precious time is entirely lost ! What shall we think of sports and pastimes, cards, and plays, and dancing, which are expressly intended to *kill time* ? —To *kill time* ! Shocking expressions to the ears of a Christian ! O had you heard what some dying sinners have said of their murdered time, when time with them was nearly over, you would dread the thought of killing time ; rather would you study how to “ redeem time,” and obey the direction of the wise man, Eccl. ix. 10. “ Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might ; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge,

nor

nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." Particularly be careful to improve holy time, I mean the Lord's day: the day which the Lord has graciously appointed for your spiritual improvement. The abuse of this day is one of the greatest sources of sin and infidelity; and the recollection of the neglect of it, is often dreadfully painful to dying people. Be exhorted then, diligently regard the means of grace on this day, and improve every sabbath as the most precious portion of a short life.

Is death certain? Will it surely come, and you know not how soon? Then let it be your first business to prepare for it? This is our Lord's advice; "Be ye also ready, for ye know not when the Son of Man cometh." It is appointed unto men *once* to die, once only; now that which can be done but once, should be well done; especially as our eternal all depends upon it. As the tree falls so it lies; as death leaves us, judgment finds us; if an error happens here, it can never be remedied. Surely then it is the highest wisdom of man to prepare for this great change. Do you ask what it is to be prepared? I answer, it is to have your sins pardoned, and your soul sanctified; for "SIN is the sting of death;" if your sins are pardoned you need not fear to die; and if your soul is sanctified by grace, death will be your gain. This then is your great concern, your immediate business. Fly, instantly fly, to the Saviour's arms. He died that we might live. His blood cleanseth from all sin. He will wash every soul from sin who applies to him for that purpose; and, at the same time, bestow his Holy Spirit to sanctify the soul, and make it meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Happy for those who are in this blessed state; they may say, "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; so that living and dying we are the Lord's." God grant this may be the happy condition of us all.

Let us now proceed to the *second* part of this great subject, namely, **ETERNAL JUDGMENT**; “after death the judgment.”

Immediately after death, it is presumed, the soul, separated from the body, appears before God; and by a private, particular, and personal judgment, receives the sentence of eternal life, or eternal death. The Scripture abundantly shews, that the soul subsists in a separate state from the body. Our Lord promised the dying thief that he should be with him, on the very day of his death, in paradise; and St. Paul longed to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord;” accounting it far better than the highest state of privilege or usefulness in the church.

But the accounts we have in the Scripture of the judgment, refer to *the great day*, when the dead shall be raised from their graves, when small and great shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. The glory and grandeur of this day will be far beyond the power of language to express. “The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised.” “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, with his mighty angels.” “The Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him: then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats.”

Reason itself must allow the necessity of a future judgment. At present, we often see the wicked prosper, while good men are much afflicted. How many murderers, oppressors, and persecutors, escape punishment. But it is inconsistent with the justice of God that it should always be so. “He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, when all men

men shall give an account of what they have done in the body, whether it be good or bad." Even now *conscience* testifies to the future judgment, by passing a private sentence on all our actions; and summoning us to appear at the bar of God, to answer for them.

To shew how justly and righteously every thing will be done on that occasion, it is said, Rev. xx. 12, "The books were opened, and the dead were judged out of those things, which were written in the books, according to their works.

The *law* will be opened. The commandments of God are the rule of men's actions; and are any "of the works of the law?" Do they seek righteousness by their doings? Let them now appeal to the Searcher of hearts, that they never broke this law in thought, word, or deed, but loved and served God perfectly, without sin, all their lives; then may they claim life by the law; but this is impossible. No man living will be justified in this manner; but the law will for ever condemn all who have broken it, yet have neglected the great salvation revealed in

The book of the *gospel*. In this blessed book "the law of faith" is revealed; "the righteousness of God by faith, is revealed to faith;" it is declared, that he that believeth in Jesus shall be saved; and happy will it be for those who are found true believers, who, having known their ruined and helpless state by the law, have fled for refuge to the grace of the gospel, and believing in Jesus for righteousness, are "found in him."

Beside these, the book of God's remembrance will be opened. God, who knows all our actions, and all our secret thoughts, records them in his book. Nothing done by man, whether good or bad, is forgotten; for it is written, that "he will bring every secret thing

into judgment, and "that for every idle word that men speak, they shall render an account."

Exactly agreeing with this, will be the book of *conscience*, which shall also be opened; or, in plainer words, every man shall stand convicted in his own conscience, that he is guilty of every charge brought against him by the law. At present sinners take little notice of their sins; and if they feel a little remorse of conscience, soon forget it; but at the great day, they will all rush upon the memory. Conscience shall serve instead of a thousand witnesses; and, as the Scripture speaks, "every mouth shall be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God."

But, blessed be God, there will be one more book opened, and that is, *the book of life*, containing a list of the names of all the people of God; even of those who were chosen by the Father to salvation; redeemed by the blood of Christ; and who were called, renewed, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Here will be found the names of all those people who were convinced of their sin and misery, humbled on account of their abominations, and who being enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, came to him by precious faith, for life and salvation; and who proved the truth of their faith by the holiness of their lives and conversation.

Now hear, from the word of God, what will be the *sentences* pronounced on the assembled world, at that awful period. When a poor criminal at the assizes is tried for his life, what a solemn moment is that, when silence being demanded by an officer of the court, every voice is hushed, and every eye is fixed on the judge! Each of us shall then become, not a spectator of another's trial, but an expectant of our own sentence; that sentence which shall fix, beyond the possibility

ability of an alteration, our happy, or our miserable doom.

Now, hearken ! Matt. xxiv. 34. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world ; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink," &c. &c. Let us take care, my friends, to understand this aright ; for many have sadly mistaken it. We are not to imagine, that such good works as are here mentioned merit heaven ; this is not only contrary to the whole gospel, but contrary also to the meaning of this place. You are to observe, that the judgment here represented is of professors of the gospel : all the persons here spoken of, both at the right and left hand of Christ, are such as were called by his name, and professed to be believers in him ; and when it is said they are judged *according to their works*, it means, according to the evidence of their works ; that is, whether the faith they pretended to have, brought forth good works or not. The sentence passed is not *for their works*, nor *for their faith* neither. The kingdom they receive is not their *wages*, but their *inheritance* ; not merited, as it were yesterday, but "prepared for them, before the foundation of the world ;" and they were prepared for it, not by their works, but by the grace of God, which united them to Christ, led them to believe, and enabled them to bring forth the fruits here mentioned, namely, works of love to the saints ; not mere works of humanity ; but of love to the poor despised saints of God, because they belonged to Jesus. These happy persons you see had no proud thoughts of the merit of their actions ; for they humbly cry, "Lord, when saw we thee hungry and gave thee meat," &c.

But O how awful is the other sentence. "Then shall

shall he say unto them on the left hand; *Depart ye cursed*; into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" Q, what a word is that—"Depart." What! depart from Christ? Depart from the fountain of all happiness? It will be to the condemned sinner the most dreadful word that ever sounded in his ears: and yet how dreadfully just! for it will be said to that sinner, who, in his heart has said a thousand times to Christ, "Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways."

This sentence will be pronounced against those professors of religion, whose pretended faith did not produce the fruits of love to the saints. Sins of *omission* only are here mentioned! neglecting to help and relieve the poor and afflicted members of Christ. And if this will be sufficient ground of condemnation, what think you will be the lot of persecutors, who instead of feeding, cloathing, and visiting the members of Christ, robbed them of their food, raiment, liberty, and life? What will be the portion of drunkards, swearers, whoremongers, sabbath-breakers, and the whole herd of profane and vicious sinners? Such, we are elsewhere assured, shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven, but must have their portion with devils and damned spirits.

APPLICATION.

When St. Paul reasoned "of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled." Did a heathen judge tremble, and shall a Christian be stupid and unaffected? "Behold, he cometh with clouds! Every eye shall see him!" *Your eyes shall see him.* You have received the solemn summons this day. What will you do? If wise, you will act like Noah, "who being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with

with fear, 'buildded an ark to the saving of his house." If unwise, you will be like his infidel neighbours, who laughed him to scorn, and perished in the flood. If ever you would wish then to be numbered with the saints, now lay to heart the solemn truths you have heard. Retire a little from the bustle of the world, and from the company of the gay. Endeavour to realize the important scene. O think of the tremendous day, and the poor miserable state of poor Christless sinners. "Those who are then found Christless, will also be speechless, helpless, and hopeless. How will their heads hang down, and their knees knock together! O what pale faces, quivering lips, and fainting hearts! O dreadful day, when the earth shall be trembling, the stars falling, the trumpet sounding, the dead rising, the elements melting, and the world on fire."

This scene, so tremendous to a sinner, will be the most happy and joyful that ever was known to the humble believer in Jesus. The second coming of Christ is spoken of in Scripture as a most desirable event; and true Christians are described as "loving his appearance," and saying, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly." And would you not wish to call this great and glorious Judge your friend, and to be owned by him at the great day? Well then, know, my friends, that he is now set before you in the gospel, as an all-sufficient and most gracious Saviour. He is now as gracious as he will then be glorious. Why would you keep at a distance from him? His blood can cleanse you from all your past sins, though deeply dyed as scarlet and crimson. He came to seek and save such sinners as you. Look then to him and be saved. Come but to him, he will not cast you out. Believe in him, and he will be your friend. Your first business in religion is to fly to your Saviour's arms, and find salvation in his blood. He will then give you his Holy Spirit to soften your heart, subdue your iniquities,

quities, and enable you to bring forth those works of love, which he will graciously own and reward in the great day.

Let the thoughts of "appointed death and judgment" be duly improved by the believer. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?" What watchfulness, what seriousness, becomes us! Let us be concerned to be always ready; daily walking humbly and closely with God; fitting loose to all created objects, from which death may so suddenly separate us; and having our affections set on heavenly things, to which death will so readily transmit us. Look on death as a disarmed foe; a serpent which may hiss, but cannot sting. Look on judgment as a most desirable event; when soul and body being united, and made perfect in holiness, shall be openly acknowledged, and for ever made happy in the full enjoyment of Christ to all eternity.

Blessed be God, for Jesus Christ.

5 DE60

ON

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the Righteous into Life eternal.

SERM. XII

M

kind,

kind, at the great day. To those on his right hand he will say, "Come, ye blessed," to those on his left, "Go, ye cursed." The sentence will be no sooner pronounced than executed. "These last shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

The very word *Eternity* ought to fix our attention on this great subject. O that it may have as good an effect upon every person here, as it had upon a lady, of whom the following story is related by several authors: A lady, who was fond of gaiety, spent the whole afternoon and evening with a party at cards, and other vain amusements; and, returning home late at night, found her waiting-maid diligently reading a religious book. Happening to look over her shoulder, she saw what it was, and said, Poor melancholy soul, why dost thou sit here so long poring upon thy book? After this she retired to bed, but could not sleep: she lay sighing and weeping for several hours. Being repeatedly asked by her servant what was the matter, she burst into tears and said—"O, it was one word that I saw in your book that troubles me; there I saw the word *Eternity*." God grant, my friends, that we may now so consider eternity, that the word may not be a trouble to us, but a pleasure! In order to this, we must, *First*, Consider the scripture account of hell; that so we may escape it; and, *Secondly*, The scripture account of heaven, that so we may be put upon seeking it.

First, then, let us turn our thoughts to the account that the word of God gives us of hell. It is true, it is an awful subject, and wicked men do not love to hear of it: but if they cannot bear to hear of it, how will they be able to endure it? Our Saviour, in the text, calls it *Everlasting punishment*.

It is *punishment*. Now punishment is a pain inflicted on account of the breaking some law. Hell is the prison where the breakers of God's law will be confined and punished. God has made known his will in the ten commandments. These require us to love and serve him; but being fallen creatures, and unable of ourselves to do it aright, he has also given us his gospel. Herein Christ is set forth as an all-sufficient Saviour; able and willing to save us from the guilt already contracted by our sins; and to renew and sanctify us, that we may comply with his will, and serve him acceptably. This is certainly our reasonable service. But the sinner refuses it. He is so strongly bound with the cords of his sins, so in love with the lusts of the flesh, so besotted with the love of the world, that he persists in his sin, notwithstanding the warnings of God; and neglects salvation, though a thousand times invited and intreated. Thus he lives, and thus he dies. What must be the consequence? God is just, as well as merciful. His laws cannot be dispensed with. The sinner has no room to complain. He was warned; he was entreated; but he chose the ways of sin, and now he must take the wages; for "the wages of sin is death." Not the death of the body only, for good men as well as bad men die; but the *second death*, the death of the soul, in its everlasting separation from God, the fountain of life and happiness.

This is the import of that awful word *depart*. In the present world, whether men know it or not, all their comfort flows from his favour. God is the chief good, and the source of all the good in the world. It is he who has made creatures what they are. It is his sun which fills the world with light; it is his power by which man subsists, and enjoys his senses and his health. It is from his creatures we get our food and raiment; and though wicked men forget God in all their mercies,

they are nevertheless from him, and in their proper tendency lead to him, for "the goodness of God leadeth us to repentance." But in hell, all these comforts will be withdrawn. They did not answer their purpose to soften the hard and rebellious heart to obedience; and now, the season of trial, and the day of grace being over, there is no end for which they should be continued.

But it is not the loss of bodily comforts only that the damned must sustain; they must for ever lose the infinite pleasures that the redeemed will enjoy in the presence of Christ, and in the society of the blessed. This indeed they do not value now; but they will then. They will then plainly see that heaven itself consists in the presence and favour of God. They will have a tormenting prospect of the happiness of others: so Dives, in the parable, is represented as seeing "Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom;" and this will aggravate their misery, as it would that of a man perishing for hunger, to see others feasting; or, as our Lord expresses it, Luke xv. 28, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

The punishment of *loss* is not all; there is the punishment of *sense* likewise; hell is not only the loss of happiness, but it is the sense and feeling of the most exquisite sufferings. Take an account of it from the lips of Jesus Christ himself; speaking of hell, he says, "Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." This is the description he gives of it over and over again, in Mark ix. By "the worm that dieth not" is generally understood the gnawings of a guilty conscience; or that painful *remorse* which sinners will feel when they remember the sin and folly which brought

brought them to hell. Thus, in the parable, Abraham speaks to Dives, and says, "Son, remember that thou, in thy lifetime, receivedst thy good things."

Memory will be a dreadful source of misery. "Son, remember!" said Abraham to Dives. Poor sinners will remember the good instructions they received from their parents, the faithful sermons they heard from their ministers, the solemn admonitions they had from their own conscience. They will remember what Sabbaths they mispent, what mercies they abused, what judgments they slighted. They will remember with what contempt they treated serious piety; and in vain will they wish to be in the place of those they once despised. It will be intolerable for them to reflect on their folly in parting with heaven for such wretched trifles. How despicably small will the pleasures of sin then appear to them. They will not be able to bear themselves, when they think for what they have lost their God, and heaven, and their souls. And this will fill them with the most horrid rage and fury. They will be inwardly racked with envy, hatred, and resentment against God, against their tempters, against the companions of their sins, and especially against themselves.

But besides this inward torment, or "the worm that never dies," there will be *outward torment*, or "the fire that is never quenched." The nature of this fire, or the place where it is, are matters of foolish curiosity: our business is not to amuse ourselves with questions about it, but to take care to avoid it. God, who sustained the companions of Daniel in a hot furnace, so that they were not scorched, can easily support life in the burnings of hell. The wrath of God, who, as an avenger of sin, is "a consuming fire," is the hell of hell; and "who can tell the power of his anger?" Our

utmost fears of it come short of the truth. A spark of this fire in a guilty conscience is intolerable, for "a wounded spirit who can bear?" Job, in his affliction, cried, "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God set themselves in array against me."

What will terribly add to the greatness of these sufferings is, that they are without any intermission, or mitigation. In the greatest miseries of this life, God is graciously pleased to allow some intervals of rest; but of those in hell it is said, Rev. xiv. 11, "They have no rest day nor night." Think of this, you who never cease from sin, but do evil day and night; the damned have no rest from their torment. Dives asked but a momentary alleviation of his torture, when he desired that Lazarus might be sent "to dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool his tongue;" but even this was denied him.

This, my friends, is a very short and slight account from the scriptures of truth of the dreadful sufferings of miserable sinners in hell. And who, in his senses, would venture upon such a course of life, as must lead to *one hour's* sufferings of this kind? But, O, it is not an hour, it is not a day, it is not a week, it is not a month, it is not a year, it is not seven years, or fourteen years, or an hundred years, it is not a thousand years, it is not merely as long as from the foundation of the world to this day! O how would the damned rejoice, if ten thousand years might finish their miseries! but it is for ETERNITY. Do you start at the word? It is Christ's word. Christ says in the text, "these shall go away into *everlasting* punishment." In vain do letter-learned men try to reason away the solemn truth, and lessen the duration of future punishment; Christ says it is *eternal*; and uses the very same word to signify

nify an *eternal heaven* as he does to express an *eternal hell*; (for the words are the same in the original) besides, it is said, Rev. xiv. 11, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever;" and our Lord also declares, "their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched."

Tremble, sinner, at the "*wrath to come*." That wrath which is now coming, and will soon be here, will even then be "*wrath to come*." When a million million million years are past it will still be "*wrath to come*," because it shall never have an end!

O that we could impress upon you a lasting idea of *Eternity*! Suppose all the vast ocean to be distilled by single drops, and a thousand years to pass between every drop; how many millions of years would it take to empty it? Suppose the whole world to be made up of grains of sand, and one grain only to be taken away in a thousand years; how many millions of years would it take to remove the whole? We cannot count how long; yet we suppose it may be done in a most immense length of time. Suppose it done. Suppose the ocean emptied, drop by drop. Suppose the globe reduced, grain by grain, to the last sand. But would eternity be spent? Would eternity be lessened? No, not at all. It is a whole eternity still; and the torments of the damned would be as far from an end, as when the reckoning began. A minute bears some proportion to a million of years; but millions of millions bear no proportion to eternity.

Sinner, have you reason? Have you common sense? Have you self-love? Summon up your powers then, and determine this moment, whether you had best go on in the way of sin, for the sake of your short-lived pleasures, thus to be repaid with everlasting woe; or whether

whether it will not be your wisdom this moment to forsake them, and, by the grace of God, choose the way to eternal life,

Before we proceed, stop, and take a view of *sin*. Will any man but a fool "make a mock of sin," when he sees what its wages are? Is that "a madman who saith about arrows, firebrands, and death, and saith, Am I not in sport? He is ten thousand times more mad who sports with sin, and laughs at that which fills hell with groans and tears. Be persuaded not to trifle, as many do, with the name of hell and damnation. Many, who cannot bear to hear these in a sermon, use them in a jesting manner, in their common discourse. This is one of Satan's ways to ruin souls. People sport with these things, till they forget their importance, and find, too late, that they are serious matters.

"Who laughs at sin, laughs at his Maker's frowns;
Laughs at the sword of justice o'er his head;
Laughs at the dear Redeemer's tears and wounds,
Who, but for sin, had never groan'd nor bled!"

"Awake then, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Fly, sinner, from the "wrath to come." "Escape for thy life, look not behind thee, tarry not in all the plain, lest thou be consumed." Think, what a miserable soul in hell would give to be in thy present situation. Think, how hell would resound with joy, could the good news of salvation be preached to lost souls. Well, Sirs, they are preached to *you*. This day is salvation come to this house. As yet, there is hope. Christ came to deliver from the wrath to come. It may be, you were brought here at this time for the very purpose of being warned to fly to the refuge. Christ is a mighty Saviour. Nothing is too hard for him. "Come then,

SERMON XII.

then, for all things are ready." If God has made you willing, depend upon it he will make you welcome. Who can tell but instead of being fuel for everlasting burnings, it may be said of you—"Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

We now gladly turn to the more pleasing part of our text—"but the righteous into life eternal."

Who are the righteous? "There is none righteous" upon the earth, saith the scripture, "no not one"—that is, *in himself*. A righteous man, and a sinner, are two contraries; to be righteous, is to keep the law perfectly, which no mere man ever did; and no fallen man can; for "all have sinned:" sin being "the transgression of the law." How then can any man, being a sinner, become righteous? There is but one way. It is by the righteousness of Christ, put to the account of an unrighteous man. This righteousness Christ wrought out by his perfect obedience to the law. This righteousness is held out in the gospel; and when a sinner is convinced that he wants it, and must perish without it, he comes to God for it; God gives it him; he receives it by faith, puts it on, wears it, lives and dies in it, and being "found in Christ," he is admitted, in this wedding garment, to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The persons called "righteous" in the text had thus put on Christ; and the faith whereby they did so, wrought by love. The context shews how their faith wrought by works: they loved the Members of Christ for Christ's sake, and shewed their love to him, by helping them in their afflictions. These are the persons who go into life eternal.

What

What is heaven? A carnal man can have no idea of it, or none but what is carnal, and ridiculous. It is not a Mahometan paradise, where the lusts of the flesh may be indulged. No; "life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel;" and there we find it consists in a complete deliverance from all the evils of the present state; and in the enjoyment of all that can render the soul perfectly and for ever happy.

Need we be told that "man is born to trouble?" This is our sad, and only certain, inheritance; mingled indeed, with a thousand undeserved mercies. But all the sorrows of a believer shall cease at his death. No more excessive labour and fatigue. No pinching want and poverty. No painful, irksome, loathsome diseases. The inhabitant of heaven shall not say, "I am sick." Nor shall any of the numberless sorrows of mind, we now feel, follow us to glory. We shall not suffer in our own persons, nor shall we suffer in or by our relations or friends. We shall "drop the body of sin" in the dust; and we shall no more be the grieved spectators of sin in the world. God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pains, for the former things are passed away," Rev. xxi. 4.

But this is not all. Our knowledge, which is now so very small, shall be wonderfully increased. It is eternal life to know God; but O, how little do we now know of him! but "the pure in heart shall see God," and know in a moment, more than all the learned could attain in many years. "We shall know, even as we are known,"—we shall have as certain, immediate, and familiar a knowledge of divine things, as any of our most intimate friends now have of us; yea, we shall know God, and Christ, and angels in the same kind of way

way that they now know us; not "through a glass darkly," but "face to face," as clearly and distinctly as one man beholds another when they converse together. But the heaven of heaven will be the presence of Christ, being with Christ, and beholding his glory. This is what Christ, as Mediator, prayed for in behalf of his disciples. "Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, John xvii. 24. This is what Paul longed for, and wished to depart to enjoy: "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ," Phil. i. 23. And what will render the vision of Christ so very excellent is, that "we shall be like him when we see him as he is"—we shall bear his amiable and illustrious image of light and love, holiness and happiness in our souls. Even our bodies, now vile by reason of sin, and which must soon be viler still in the corruption of the grave, shall, when raised from the dead, be made like unto his glorious body. Add to this another most desirable blessing; the constant company of the saints. Believers shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; with the prophets and apostles; and with all the redeemed of every nation. But what tongue can tell, what heart can conceive, what God has prepared for them that love him?

APPLICATION.

What more can be said to engage your regard to religion, than what has been now said. Life and death, blessing and cursing, heaven and hell, have been set before you. Surely "*one thing is needful*," even the care of the soul.

"Is there a dreadful hell?" Well; we have been warned of the danger, and advised to fly to Jesus, the only deliverer from the wrath to come.

How

How great is the evil of sin, seeing that God will punish it in this dreadful manner! Is there a hell of eternal torment for sinners? O then be afraid of sin, however pleasant it may be. Who would drink a glass of the most delicious liquor, however thirsty he might be, if he knew that deadly poison was mixed with it? Beware then of sin, which infallibly destroys the soul, and shun it as you would shun hell.

Is there a glorious heaven? We are invited to seek it. There is but one way to heaven, and Christ is that way. O what a Saviour is Jesus? Can we, who deserve hell, avoid it. Yes, glory be to him, he shed his precious blood to redeem his people from it. His perfect righteousness is the only *title* to glory; and this righteousness is theirs, who believe in him. There must also be a *fitness* for this holy state, and this is the work of his Spirit. If we are found among the redeemed, we owe it to the Father's love, the Son's salvation, and the Spirit's grace. God grant that we may so hear his word, at this, and at all times, that, mixing faith with it, we may profit thereby; and, "growing up into Christ in all things," and "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," we may faithfully and diligently serve him, and our generation according to his will; enjoy his gracious presence in all the means of grace; experience the support of his gospel in the trying hour of death; and, finally, have "abundant entrance afforded us into his everlasting kingdom and glory."

Now, to the God of our salvation, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be universal and everlasting praise. Amen.